# THE LIFE
OF
# MOTHER DUCHESNE

*TRANSLATED BY*

*LADY GEORGIANA FULLERTON*

# LIFE OF MOTHER DUCHESNE.

ROEHAMPTON:
PRINTED BY JAMES STANLEY.

BAUNARD, LOUIS

# THE LIFE OF
# MOTHER DUCHESNE,

RELIGIOUS OF
THE SOCIETY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS,
AND FOUNDRESS OF
THE FIRST HOUSES OF THAT SOCIETY IN AMERICA.

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BY THE
ABBÉ BAUNARD,
*Honorary Canon of Orleans.*

TRANSLATED BY
LADY GEORGIANA FULLERTON.

"Quia fecisti viriliter, et confortatum est cor tuum, . . . ideò et manus Domini confortavit te, et ideò eris benedicta in æternum" (*Judith* xv. 11).

1879.

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# INTRODUCTION.

THE following history completes Mother Barat's life. The first of these biographies has shown the origin and progress of the Society of the Sacred Heart in France and Europe. The present volume describes its establishment in Northern America. These two works were carried on with the same object and in the same spirit. What Mother Barat would have wished herself to do from the very outset of her religious career, what during all her life she regretted not having the power personally to accomplish, another was called to effect, at the cost of more than thirty years' incessant labour, prayer, and suffering. This devoted missionary, this zealous apostle, was Mother Duchesne.

The scene of her apostolate was Louisiana, a country which was originally colonized by the French, and which has always retained a strange attachment to the land of its forefathers. From a Catholic point of view America is deeply interesting to Europe. From a material point of view alone it would afford a subject of wonder and admiration to the Old World, for it is a marvellous fact that a people which the famous Comte de Maistre described at the beginning of the century as "an infant in its cradle," which numbered only about four millions,

should have multiplied tenfold, and have attained at this moment a total of not less than forty millions, scattered over a territory as large as the whole of Europe, up to the Oural Mountains. But we who care for souls more than for anything else, and who only value a progress which tends to the moral greatness and the eternal felicity of mankind, we shall begin by considering the state of that country with regard to the reign of Jesus Christ, and by recounting the peaceful conquests by which the true religion has taken possession of it. We must look back to the religious antecedents of North America, in order to understand the position of the Church in that country at the time when God sent there the valiant woman whose life we are about to write.

To begin by the east. The tribes which inhabited the eastern side of the Alleghany Mountains were still quite savage and idolatrous when, on the 25th of March, feast of the Annunciation, in the year 1634, two English vessels, the *Ark* and the *Dove*, landed two hundred Catholic families from Great Britain on the banks of the Potomac. This colony, under the direction of one of the sons of Lord Baltimore, an eminent convert of those days, came to take possession of the lands which that nobleman had obtained from his King as a refuge for the faithful Catholics so cruelly persecuted in England. Mass was celebrated on a rustic altar; a large cross, carried in procession on the shoulders of the leaders whilst the Litany was sung, was planted in a prominent place on the shore and devoutly kissed by all the

colonists. That cross was their tree of liberty. "That day," the Protestant author, Bancroft, writes, "religious liberty found a home at least in one spot of the world." This refuge was at first only a village, to which the pilgrims gave the name of St. Mary. It became afterwards a town, and was called Baltimore. The new colony was named Maryland; Charles I. had chosen himself thus to designate it in honour of his wife, the beautiful and unfortunate Henrietta Maria of France.

Under a mild system of government and the influence of the Catholic faith this desert coast flourished, and the same Protestant historian says that "Catholic Maryland made greater progress in six months than Protestant Virginia in several years." Two Jesuit missionaries, Fathers White and Altham, had accompanied the colonists. They said to the Indians, "We have not come to wage war against you, but to teach you the law of grace and love, and to live with you as brethren." "Peace with all." Such was Baltimore's motto. Members of the various Protestant sects, Presbyterians, Puritans and Quakers, and even Anglicans, tired of their dissensions and perpetual strife, took refuge in the ports of Chesapeake, relying on the promise of the noble governor: "The governor of Maryland will never torment any one on account of their religion, who professes to believe in Jesus Christ." The Quaker refugees called Maryland "the land of sanctuary," and the forty-three years of Cecil Lord Baltimore's administration have ever been considered by all historians as a golden age of religion, prosperity, and liberty.

But Protestant intolerance soon changed the whole

face of things. After Charles I.'s dethronement, the Puritans of Maryland, relying on the support of Cromwell, and later on of William of Orange, procured the application of the persecuting laws of the mother-country to the hospitable Catholics who had received them into their settlement. Charles, Lord Baltimore, was displaced, and a set of strangers having seized on the government, robbed the Catholics of their property, their churches, their schools, and their children. They carried their insulting tyranny to the point of imposing the same tax on the entrance of a Catholic into the city of Baltimore as on the importation of a slave. The persecution was cruel and long-continued. It became at last intolerable. Many of the inhabitants of Maryland forsook the colony founded by their fathers. Some of them retired into Pennsylvania; others went to Louisiana; too many of them were driven to apostacy. At the time of the War of Independence, the Catholics in Maryland had dwindled down to one-eighth of the population. The Church was threatened with extinction in that country, but the hour of its resurrection was at hand.

Now turning to the north, from whence we shall gradually retrace our steps towards the scene of Mother Duchesne's apostolate, we have to go back to the time when Jacques Cartier, in 1534, planted the cross and the lilies, the standard of France, in Canada. From that epoch up to the moment when, about a century afterwards, in 1636, the great and holy M. Olier gave its Christian capital to that mission by the foundation of the city of Ville Marie, the French missionaries, extending

their operations towards the west, had never ceased to evangelize the Indian tribes. A member of the American Government * wrote not long ago, "That vast continent, which even now, with all our means of locomotion, we cannot explore in less than a year, was visited by those apostles from one ocean to the other, before Raleigh and Smith and the Pilgrim Fathers had landed on our shores." Another Protestant says: "Before a single Virginian had crossed the Blue Bridge, and at the time when Connecticut was still the extreme frontier of New England, more than one young French missionary, whose early days had been spent in the sunny valleys of Languedoc, explored the deserts of Wisconsin and made the prairies of the Illinois ring with the sound of Catholic hymns. From lake to lake, from river to river, the Jesuits advanced, without ever resting in their course, and obtaining an unexampled influence on the savages; they converted to Christianity the warlike Miamis as well as the voluptuous Illinois." † Bancroft, ‡ the Protestant historian we have already quoted, dwelling on that subject, exclaims: "For to what inclemencies from nature and from man was each missionary among the barbarians exposed! He defies the severity of the climate wading through water or through snows, without the comfort of fire, having no bread but pounded maize, and often no food but the unwholesome moss from the rocks; labouring incessantly; exposed to live, as it were, without nourishment, to sleep without a

* John Russell Bartlett, *Personal Narrative of Explorations in Texas and New Mexico.*

† *Rapp-Knickerbocker*, June, 1838.

‡ *History of the United States*, vol. ii. pp. 325, 326. London, 1876.

resting-place, to travel far, and always incurring perils; to carry his life in his hand, expecting captivity, death from the tomahawk, tortures, fire. And yet the simplicity and freedom of life in the wilderness had its charms. . . . How often was the pillow of stones like that where Jacob felt the presence of God! How often did the ancient oak, of which the centuries were untold, seem like the tree of Mambre, beneath which Abraham broke bread with the angels!"

The blood of these valiant men watered the soil of the land where they thus laboured. The names of Isaac Jogues, Jean de Brébeuf, Gabriel Lallemand, and many others, form the martyrology of that infant Church. "*Ibo et non redibo*," wrote Father Jogues, when he started for his last mission to the Mohicans. They all knew that they were baptized unto death. "Dead to the world, and possessing their souls in perfect peace, they never turned back. The history of their labours is connected with the origin of every celebrated town in the annals of French America. Not a cape was turned, not a river entered, but a Jesuit led the way."*

It was a Jesuit, Father Marquette, who, on the 15th of June, 1673, accompanied by Joliet, in a canoe made only of bark, explored the Mississippi as far as its junction with the Missouri. It was a Récollet, Father Hennequin, who accompanied Cavalier la Salle, when he went down the great river in 1682. Five years afterwards La Salle, in the course of another journey of the same kind, gave to the valley of the Mississippi the name of Louisiana

* *History of the United States.*

in honour of Louis XIV., and soon afterwards the French, under the guidance of Le Hontan and then of d'Yberville, established commercial stations and forts in the name of the King of France.

Then on the banks of the Mississippi stream and its tributaries, the Ohio, the Wabash, and the Illinois river, the missionaries founded congregations, and the whole country was preparing to embrace Christianity. A knowledge of the redeeming sufferings of the God-Man exercised a wonderful influence over the untutored natives of those wild regions. The Ottowa, the Illinois, the Potowatomy Indians, abandoned their ferocious habits, buried their axes as a sign of peace, and allowed their finest trees to be cut down for the erection of what they called "the lodges of prayer." In the north the Abenakis and the Iroquois, from their unfortunate proximity to European nations, were dragged into their wars. Still they furnished many good and holy Christians to the rising Church of those regions. Amongst them, like a beautiful wild flower, we find the young Iroquois virgin Catherine Tegahkouita, who died in the odour of sanctity at the age of twenty-four, near the brook and the tree where she had spent her life at the foot of the Cross. In the west, the thirty Reductions of California enjoyed the same peace and blessings as the celebrated Reductions of the Jesuits in Paraguay. In the south, the Natchez, a famous and warlike tribe, at last laid down its arms at the feet of the Black Robes. Over all that vast continent the Creator had sent forth His Spirit and renewed the face of the earth.

A bright future seemed then in store for the Church; these populations united under the mild sway of Christianity had happy prospects before them even for this world, for happiness and truth had come to them together. Even Protestants admit it as a fact that Catholicism was the only power that knew how to civilize the Indians and make them happy. General Cass acknowledges that up to this day "the epoch of French (and Catholic) domination has been the only era of prosperity the Indians can remember."

Another Protestant arrives at this conclusion. "If America had been left in the hands of the French the existence of the native tribes would have been preserved, and they would have become worshippers of the God of the Christians, just as in India, if they had not shortly afterwards lost all their possessions there, Buddhism would have made way for the Gospel."

But a day came when, by the crimes of men, all these fair hopes were doomed to vanish. Whilst in New England the Catholics were subjected to that crushing ostracism we have described, the same tyranny organized similar outrages in Canada and the west. The English Government, by the Peace of Utrecht, had acquired possession of Hudson's Bay, Newfoundland, and Acadia, and coveting also Louisiana, it thought by the forcible suppression of Catholicism to destroy more effectually the dominion of France in every part of America. The natural ferocity of the Indians was roused and excited against their benefactors. During thirty years horrible barbarities were committed. The Indian congregations

were deluged with blood. "Then," as Bishop England writes, "the children of the forest, who clung to their faith, filled the air with lamentations, and mingled their tears with the water of their rivers. The Black Robes gradually disappeared from that country, the Christian Sacrifice ceased to be offered on those shores, and when by a just retribution the war of Independence, 1776, deprived England of the colony she had oppressed, the infant republic of America found hardly a trace on its soil of that faith which had made the wilderness blossom like the rose under the shade of the Cross."

Often in the vast prairies of the far west a conflagration consumes the grass of the fields apparently so completely that the traveller imagines it can never reappear. But in the following spring if he journeys again through the same places he is astonished to see a new luxuriant vegetation where he had left nothing but ashes. Such, and far more wonderful still, was the renovation in the Church of America which began at the end of the eighteenth century, and continues to expand in our days.

Two causes brought about and favoured this revival of the true faith in the continent of America. The emancipation of the United States restored liberty to the Church, and the emigration of numerous priests, banished from France and Europe by the French Revolution, obtained for it a supply of valiant missionaries.

Washington had said in his address to the Catholics of the United States, "May the members of your communion, animated as they are by a purely Christian spirit, enjoy every happiness, temporal and spiritual." The

Church in those States responded to the good wishes of this eminent man by reconstituting itself on a more firm basis through a closer and more intimate union with Rome. Up to that time the few priests scattered about New England were under the powerless and inefficient authority of the Vicar Apostolic in London, whose action was impeded by the persecuting laws of the mother-country. The American Church, now politically free, applied to the Holy See for pastors who would from that time forward be independent of all authority except that of God and His Vicar on earth. This request of the Catholic clergy was supported by Congress, and the Sovereign Pontiff Pius VI. promoted to the episcopal see of Baltimore Bishop Carroll, who had been named and presented to His Holiness by the suffrages of his priests. He had been a member of the Society of Jesus before its suppression, and a native of Maryland, where his family had been conspicuous in the conflict for the independence of the United States. He was so generally esteemed that Franklin said, "John Carroll is the model of a bishop and the best of Christians."

From the moment of his appointment the Church of America entered on a new phase. With the spirit of a true missionary he took possession of a diocese fifteen hundred leagues in length, and from eight to nine in breadth, at the head of only about twenty priests, valuable relics like himself of the Society of Jesus. The Abbé Emery, worthy successor and faithful observer of the saintly M. Olier's traditions, gave him a first colony of Sulpicians, who, in 1791, came to found and to direct

a college at Baltimore. The priests driven out of France by the Revolution, those banished from San Domingo by the sanguinary violence of insurrection, brought a contingent to Bishop Carroll's little army of apostles, of men accustomed to the holy strife for souls, and ready to sacrifice their homes and their lives. Wonderful and admirable fruits of the Cross! It was the persecutions of Protestant England which, in 1663, drove two hundred Catholic families on the desert shores of the Potomac, and created the State of Maryland, and a century and a half later persecution again lent its aid to the revival of Catholicism in America, by throwing on its shores the scattered remnants of those wrecks which the storm of revolutionary passions had multiplied in France and in Europe.

The concession of Louisiana to the American Union in 1803, and fifteen years afterwards the nomination of a great apostolic Bishop, Mgr. Dubourg, to the see of New Orleans, accelerated the reconstruction of the Church in the south. In the following narrative we shall see how this work extended all over America. The creation of new sees, the organization of a regular hierarchy, the periodical celebration of diocesan councils, of institutions of charity, of associations for prayers and good works, the foundation of seminaries, schools, colleges, and missions—such is the mere outline of the labours which in less than a century have increased the number of Catholics from twenty-four thousand five hundred to six or seven millions, that is to say, to more than a sixth of the population of the United States.*

* The Irish Emigration should be also taken into account.—[Translator's note.]

And this is in one sense but the beginning of the conquests of the Gospel in that continent. The west, which increases every day in population and political importance, is also increasing in religious influence. When we look upon that immense field where the true religion, heresy, and infidelity are disputing the possession of men's souls—when we remember that this western portion of the States on the side of the Pacific has an area eight times larger than the States on the side of the Atlantic —that the State of Oregon is alone larger than England, Texas than France, and California than Spain—when we reflect that the plain comprised between the Alleghany and the Rocky Mountains possesses seven thousand leagues of navigable rivers and could furnish subsistence for from three to four hundred millions of men—it is impossible not to be struck with a sort of wondering astonishment at the boundless prospects thus thrown open to the Church. Hope thrills the heart at such a vista, and it makes us understand that there are souls that cannot rest till they have conquered that world for Jesus Christ.

In the astonishing progress we have described Catholic education has been and still is the principal moving power, and it is the religious congregations which are at the head of it. The Bishops formally recognized this as a fact, and the Society of the Sacred Heart was included in the number of communities of women whose services were gratefully acknowledged by the Sixth Council of Baltimore in October, 1866, when it wrote: "We accomplish a pleasing duty in paying a just tribute to the heroism of those Christian virgins, whose life spreads everywhere

amongst us the good odour of Jesus Christ, and whose self-devotion and spirit of charity have contributed further perhaps than any other cause to produce a happy change in the opinions of a great number of those most opposed to our faith."

From the earliest days of the evangelization of North America apostolic women had co-operated in the work. Already, at the time of the Canadian Mission in the seventeenth century, very eminent women had taken part in it. The courage of those valiant heroines of charity, Marie Guyard (Marie de l'Incarnation), Marguerite Bourgeois, Marie Barbier, Marguerite Lemoine, Marie Louise Dorval, Madame d'Youville, and Mdlle. Mance, has been thus extolled by a Protestant writer: "The early history of Canada teems indeed with instances of the purest religious fortitude, zeal, and heroism—of young and delicate females relinquishing the comforts of civilization to perform the most menial offices towards the sick—to dispense at once the blessings of medical aid to the body and of religious instruction to the soul of the benighted and wondering savage. They must have been upheld by a strong sense of duty—an overpowering conviction of the utility of their purposes—a full persuasion of their efficacy both towards their own eternal salvation and that of their newly converted flock. But for such impressions it would have been beyond human nature to undergo the fatigues, uncertainty, and personal dangers experienced by the first missionaries of both sexes in New France. Regardless of climate, to whose horrors they were entirely unaccustomed —of penury and famine, of danger to the person, of death,

of martyrdom itself—they pressed onward to the goal to which their religious course was directed, and, sustained by something more than human fortitude—by divine patience—they succeeded at length in establishing on a firm foundation the altars and the faith of their country and their God."*

The second outpouring of apostolical grace in the American continent in the present century had likewise its heroines. The history of that admirable woman, Mrs. Seton, is well known. What she did in the east another soul of a similar stamp did in the west and south with equal courage and equal results. By the side of the venerable Foundress of the Sisters of Charity in America we may place on the same line, both as regards the success of her apostolate and the gratitude of the American Church, the foundress of the first houses of the Sacred Heart in the Valley of Louisiana—the humble, the gifted, and valiant Mother Duchesne.

Strength—that gift of the Holy Spirit which the Scriptures call fortitude—was the pre-eminent characteristic of this heroic woman. She had a manly soul; she was strong in her conflict with the world and with herself; strong in action and strong in suffering. With all the ardour, the zeal, the valour which belongs to that virtue, she had also the rarer qualities which complete and crown it—patience and perseverance. When once she had formed a resolution no earthly power, no obstacles could shake her. A work once begun she never of her own accord abandoned. Storms and disasters and separations and bereave-

* A. Hawkins, *Pictures of Quebec, with Historical Recollections*, c. x.

ments, failures without number, poverty, illness, hunger, outward trials and inward desolation, never could for one instant disturb the peace which her confidence in God enabled her to preserve. This was the secret of her strength. There was in that chosen soul an intense fire of love which, like a focus of light and heat, gave an impulse not only to her own life, but likewise influenced all those around her. She loved Jesus Christ, His Heart, His Gospel, and His Church with passionate affection. The Blessed Sacrament was the joy of her existence, and separation from It her torment. And then she loved the Cross, that great moving power which was to be her means of rising above this world on her heavenward way. She knew this from the outset. God had said to her as He did to His Apostle of yore: "I will show her what great things she must suffer for My Name's sake." And therefore she was ever saying, like St. Paul, "When I am weak, then am I powerful."

Suffering constantly as she did, she suffered joyfully too. In that painful life of more than eighty years no sign of discouragement ever appears. Always, even in the midst of grief and sorrow, words of praise and thanksgiving are on her lips. She cared little for the things of earth; not that she did not love deeply and earnestly everything that was beautiful in the order of nature and of grace, but she loved these objects of her affection as a soul in Heaven still loves what it has left behind. We must not expect to find in her strong character that gentle sensibility, that tender sympathy, that delicate and gracious charm which made Mother Barat so loveable and attractive.

Mother Duchesne's qualities were of another description, and adapted her for her mission in a then half savage world. She had to act the part of a soldier in the Christian warfare, and a rough exterior concealed the tenderness of a heart which betrays itself nevertheless in many an incident throughout her life and letters.

A study of this life affords a remarkable instance of the unity of God's designs with regard to His servant, and the special guidance of Providence vouchsafed to her soul for this one purpose. We might almost say that she was born a missionary, and we shall trace, through the four phases into which her history is divided, the gradual operations of His grace leading her up to the culminating point of her destiny. First we see her *vocation*, dawning in the days of her childhood and gradually ripening in her youth. A love of God and of souls, a leaning towards a religious and at the same time an apostolic life, a great zeal for work amongst the poor, and children, and sufferers of all sorts; then distinct views with regard to the foreign missions, and persevering desires to follow in the wake of the great apostles of the Society of Jesus—such were the materials, so to speak, which were thrown into the great furnace of the Revolution, tried by the fire of tribulation and opposition, and then cast into the mould of the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Then comes the second phase—the *training* of that soul, its training to the religious life of the Sacred Heart, and then its training for the apostleship of missionary life. It was to be a work of twelve years. It required patience and prudence on the side of Mother Barat—

patience and docility on that of Mother Duchesne. We must not be surprised at this long delay. The work in view was one of those the foundations of which must be deep in proportion to the height it is destined to reach.

Then follows the *mission*. Mother Duchesne goes to Louisiana, and for thirty years labours there, without rest or interruption, until in her old age, with ever increasing zeal, she ends amongst the Indians of the West the apostolic work begun on the banks of the Mississippi. Then she leaves to others the glory of completing what she did for God alone, and for which she asks no earthly reward. "Others have laboured and you have entered into their labours," our Lord said to His Apostles, and the same words might now be addressed to Mother Duchesne's successors.

And then came the period of what we may call her *immolation*, if indeed the whole of her life had not more or less borne that stamp. *Ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari*—"Love to be unknown and counted for nothing;" the ten last years of her existence are comprised in those words of the Imitation of Christ. They were years of silence, prayer, self-annihilation and sufferings, daily offered up till the worn-out frame gradually wasting away, at last allowed that ardent spirit, that strong and devoted soul, to escape from earth to Heaven. God accepted the long sufferings and the final sacrifice, and did not wait till it was consummated to pay its full price.

Before Mother Duchesne's eyes were closed in death, houses of the Sacred Heart were already established in many parts of the New World, and from the threshold of Eternity she could look like Moses on a land of promise.

We will now indicate the sources from which the following narrative is drawn. They are as follows. The history and the journal of Mother Duchesne's Monastery at Grenoble, written by herself, and her voluminous correspondence from 1806 up to the time of her death with Mother Barat, and the answers to those letters; a collection of those she received from France copied by her own hand; the concise but exact journal of her mission from 1818 to 1840; and besides these original documents, a memoir drawn up in America by the first companions of her apostolate; the letters addressed to her by Bishops, Missionaries, and Priests; the history of her principal foundations in Louisiana; and then a variety of reminiscences and notes concerning the life of this venerated Mother.

We have not indeed enjoyed the privilege of visiting the scene of her distant labours, and are thus deprived of the power of describing the places mentioned in this history as only an eye witness can do; but this want has been in a great measure supplied by the zealous and intelligent co-operation of those who have lent us their assistance in this as well as in other respects, towards the accomplishment of our task.

We cannot forget those weeks in October, 1877, when all the Superiors of the houses in North America, from Canada to Louisiana, from New York to Chicago and Saint Louis were gathered together in the solitude of Conflans; at the end of their retreat they vouchsafed, together with their Mother General, to listen to these pages just then brought to a conclusion, and after lending an attentive ear to this history, gave it an approval which guarantees its authenticity and constitutes its only value.

May this book help them to spread the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the land to which they have returned. May it produce fruits of edification and salvation amongst our brethren in America, and hasten the hour, when they will in a body return to the Catholic Church—that Church which having conquered successively the world of Roman civilization and the Barbarian world, now promises to extend its sway over the whole of the Western hemisphere, thus completing the work entrusted to it by our Lord.

It must not be forgotten that this country was colonized originally not for commercial but for Religious purposes by refugees, chiefly sufferers for their faith, that it was taught by its first legislators to look upon religion as the basis of civil and political life. America cannot therefore disown its origin and belie its instincts without running the risk of a dissolution, which is no doubt threatening that great nation in spite of its ideals and hopes.

Neither the perversion of its constitution nor the violent outbreaks of its democracy are the primary causes of the evident dislocation of that powerful mechanism the marvellous rapidity of whose course filled us with astonishment. The evil, the great evil, consists in the absence of all restraining power. If it is true that no nation can exist without God, how much more strongly this principle must apply to a people so diversified as to their origin, their territories, their interests, their habits, and their languages, and who in religion alone would find a link strong enough to supply authority and unity to a body composed of so many opposite and dissentient elements.

And it is not in Protestantism that America can ever hope to find this powerful link, this instrument of union. The endless subdivisions to which Protestantism is reduced all over the world are simply infinite in America and amount to annihilation. The two opposite extremes to which error ever leads, rationalism on one side and illuminism* on the other, have attained in America their ultimate point. The Unitarians and the Universalists on the one hand, on the other, the Shakers, the Spiritualists and the Perfectionists are altogether destroying the Gospel, and behind these various denominations rises a sect that carries lying deceit and moral evil to its furthest limits—the Mormons, who under the ironical name of "the Latter Day Saints," exhibit all the shameful turpitude of Paganism, and under the sacrilegious appellation of "New Jerusalem," create eighteen hundred years after the era of redemption a new Sodom.

But the strength which Protestantism does not possess Catholicism commands, and therefore it is true, as a Protestant writer says: "the Roman Catholic faith is the real shield of America."† It is conscious of its need of religion. Natural religious instincts drive it to adopt miserable substitutions and imitations in place of the true faith. But none of them profess that vitality which our Lord spoke of when He said: "I am the vine and you are the branches." As we have already seen, many Protestants admit this superiority; one of their writers says: "In our days Catholicism seems greatly to surpass

* M. de Tocqueville, *Démocratie en Amérique.*
† *English Woman in America.*

Protestantism in living resemblance to Christ and His works." A Methodist Minister, Mr. Foster, said at a meeting at Boston in April, 1878: "I feel an admiration for the Catholics and the Roman Catholic Church, which only increases as I advance in age." After enumerating some Catholic practices and works he added: "These are the people who barely existed here sixty years ago and now they people all our Protestant cities. Before we complain of it, let us begin by acquiring some of the virtues which raise them so far above us."*

In the second place, America needs the support of some principle of authority. The more crime and political liberty a nation possesses, the more it requires the counterbalancing power of moral authority, and American democracy feels the need of a Divine power which can speak of the people's duties as well as of their rights. Catholicism alone has that power over the consciences of men, because it is the only religion which has infallible dogmas and certain hopes. In the midst of the complete absence of all discipline, which threatens with anarchy and destruction that vast empire, where men have ceased, like the builders of Babel, to understand one another, Catholicism alone can speak words and can put forth power which can reconstitute religious and social order.

Lastly, America feels the need of holiness and charity in family life, and the treatment of the poor. Catholicism has sanctifying graces which can make the lives of its people pure and their homes respectable. It can hallow and uphold the sanctity of marriage, and impart peace and

* *North-western Chronicle.*

happiness to domestic ties. It has also by its charity the gift of softening and restraining the working classes, of inspiring to the rich compassion for the poor, and respect for man, whatever be his position. Under the holy influence of the Church, the various nationalities of the United States would merge into one harmonious brotherhood. The North and the South would be reconciled, and the blacks with the whites. "It would do for the future ages of the American Union what it did for Europe in the Middle Ages, after the fall of the Roman Empire and the overthrow of the Empire of Charlemagne."*

Whether this will ever happen we dare not predict, but we can already foresee that such a result will not be obtained without an arduous conflict. During the last fifteen years especially, a jealous hatred of Catholicism has been springing up in America, threatening its religious liberty. The six thousand Freemason Lodges which oppress the United States will make every effort to import from Europe the tyrannical spirit of revolution, and there too to fetter the Church, as they have sworn to do all over the world.

But Catholic America possesses one powerful pledge of unity: her union of mind and heart with the Holy See. The attitude of her Bishops at the Vatican Council proved how deep-rooted was this attachment, and that her devotion to Rome has gone on ever increasing since the day when Gregory XVI. said: "There is not a country in the world in which I feel myself so completely Pope as in the United States." It was said by one of

* M. Claudio Jeanet, *Les Etats Unis Contemporains.*

the most valiant leaders of the new crusade which has changed the face of that country: "The Catholic Faith is the only religious element the progress of which keeps pace with the increase of population in the United States. . . . Before the end of this century the number of Catholics in the Republic will exceed that of all the other Christian communions combined together."*

The American Church will then look back with gratitude to those missionaries who laboured to win for them this glorious inheritance, and amongst those valiant servants of God it will number Mother Duchesne, and address to her as the Israelites did to their deliverer, the words which we have chosen as the Epigraph of her history. "For thou hast done manfully and thy heart has been strengthened . . . therefore, also the hand of the Lord hath strengthened thee, and therefore thou shalt be blessed for ever." *Quia fecisti viriliter et confortatum est cor tuum, ideò et manus Domini confortavit te, et ideò eris benedicta in æternum.*†

* Father Fletcher, Founder and Superior of the Paulists at New York.

Recent statistics sent from America to the *Revue Catholique* of Louvain and published in its number, March 15, 1878, tell us, that at this time the United States are divided into sixty-seven diocesan circumscriptions administered by a Cardinal Archbishop, ten Archbishops, fifty-six Bishops and Vicars Apostolic, a Prefect and two Administrators, *sede vacante*, who have under their jurisdiction five thousand five hundred and forty-eight Priests; five thousand six hundred and thirty-seven Churches, a population of about six millions two hundred and eighty-six thousand Catholics, comprising those residing outside the ecclesiastical circumscriptions, in all one-sixth of the population of the United States. It is remarkable that the States most advanced in knowledge and industry, such as New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, are those in which the greatest number of Catholics is found.

† Judith xv. ii.

# CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

*Mother Duchesne's Family. Her Birth. Her Education at the Convent of Sainte Marie. Her Novitiate at the Visitation.*

1769—1791.


| | PAGE. |
|---|---|
| The family of the Duchesnes | 3 |
| Birth of Philippine | 4 |
| Her character and childhood | 5 |
| She enters the school at Sainte Marie | 7 |
| The Monastery of the Visitation | 7 |
| Philippine's first Communion | 10 |
| Her vocation to religious life | 11 |
| She is recalled to her home | 12 |
| She enters the novitiate | 15 |
| The Revolution disperses the nuns | 19 |


## CHAPTER II.

*Mother Duchesne during the Revolution. Her heroic Devotion to prisoners, to children, and to the sick. She repurchases the Convent of Ste. Marie-d'en-Haut.*

1791—1801.


| | |
|---|---|
| Philippine seeks refuge at Granne | 21 |
| Her care of her grandmother | 23 |
| She devotes herself to good works | 24 |
| Her visits to prisons | 26 |
| Her fidelity to her vocation | 29 |
| Pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Francis Regis | 30 |
| Her care for abandoned children | 33 |
| She repurchases Sainte Marie | 35 |
| She returns there | 37 |

PAGE

CHAPTER III.

*Mother Duchesne reinstates the Visitation and the Public Worship of the Church at Sainte Marie. She is unsupported in her efforts for the re-establishment of the Convent, and has recourse to the Sacred Heart.*

1801—1804.

Her installation at Sainte Marie . . . . . 39
She reassumes the religious habit . . . . . 41
Her endeavours to restore religious spirit . . . . . 43
The nuns of the Visitation leave Sainte Marie . . . . 47
Negotiations begun with the Sacred Heart . . . . . 49
Father Varin visits Sainte Marie . . . . . 51
Mother Barat goes to Sainte Marie . . . . . 53

CHAPTER IV.

*Mother Duchesne's training in the spirit of the Sacred Heart. Her Novitiate under the direction of Mother Barat. The Convent School of Sainte Marie. Euphrosyne Jouve. Mother Duchesne is professed.*

1804—1806.

Mother Barat's influence at Sainte Marie . . . . . 55
Father Varin gives a retreat . . . . . 57
Mother Duchesne's practice of mortification . . . . 59
The contradictions she experiences . . . . . 60
Mother Barat's letters to her . . . . . 60
The school of Ste. Marie-d'en-Haut . . . . . 65
Education of Euphrosyne Jouve . . . . . 66
Mother Duchesne pronounces her vows . . . . . 68

CHAPTER V.

*Mother Duchesne's special Vocation and ardent desires for the Foreign Missions. Reverend Mother Barat's long and careful training of the future Missionary.*

1806—1812.

Visit of Dom Lestrange to Sainte Marie . . . . . 70
Mother Duchesne's vocation for the missions . . . . 72
She is encouraged by Mother Barat . . . . . 73
The night of Maundy Thursday, 1806 . . . . . 74
Her training as a missionary . . . . . 76
She is taught detachment . . . . . 77

PAGE
She is incited to a life of prayer . . . . . 78
Her austerities . . . . . 79
Mother Thérèse Maillucheau her model . . . . 83
Mother Duchesne's impatience to depart . . . . 85
Mother Barat's wise delays . . . . . 86
The long preparation . . . . . 90

## CHAPTER VI.

*Mother Duchesne's strong attachments and the sacrifices she had to make. Her family. Her Monastery. Her pupils. Her niece Aloysia.*

1812—1815.

Her love for her father and her family . . . . . 94
Her affectionate letters to her sister . . . . . 95
She loves with her mind, her heart, and her strength . . 96
She assists her father at his death . . . . . 98
Pius VII. visits Grenoble . . . . . 100
Fervour of the community . . . . . 102
The pupils at Sainte Marie . . . . . 103
Euphrosyne Jouve at school and at home . . . . 105
Euphrosyne's religious vocation . . . . . 109
Euphrosyne enters the Novitiate of Sainte Marie . . . 113

## CHAPTER VII.

*Mother Duchesne's sojourn in Paris. Her earnest entreaties to be sent to the Foreign Missions. Aloysia's sufferings. Mgr. Dubourg's arrival. Her departure for Louisiana decided upon.*

1815—1817.

Mother Duchesne entreats to be sent to the missions . . 114
Her prayers to the Blessed Virgin . . . . . 116
The new house in Paris . . . . . 117
She arranges family affairs . . . . . 118
Aloysia Jouve's immolation . . . . . 120
Mgr. Dubourg at Paris . . . . . 124
The American foundation is decided upon . . . . 128
Her perseverance is rewarded . . . . . 129

PAGE

CHAPTER VIII.

*Mother Duchesne's leavetakings and departure from Paris. Her residence and retreat at Bordeaux. Farewell letter to her family and to Aloysia. Her embarkation.*

1818.

Father Barat congratulates her . . . . . 130
Her farewell letters to her sisters . . . . . 131
Her companions Octavie Berthold and Eugénie Audé . . 133
Departure from Paris . . . . . 136
Stay at Bordeaux. Retreat . . . . . 137
Last farewells . . . . . 139
The embarkation . . . . . 144

CHAPTER IX.

*Mother Duchesne's voyage across the Atlantic. Her stay at New Orleans. Her journey up the Mississippi to St. Louis.*

1818.

The perils of the voyage . . . . . 146
Mother Duchesne's letter . . . . . 147
Arrival at New Orleans . . . . . 149
Hospitality of the Ursuline Nuns . . . . . 151
Mother Duchesne's dangerous illness . . . . 152
Her suspense . . . . . 154
Mgr. Dubourg's welcome . . . . . 155
Journey to St. Louis . . . . . 157
Arrival at St. Louis . . . . . 159

CHAPTER X.

*St. Louis of Missouri. State of Catholicism in Louisiana. The Nuns of the Sacred Heart are sent to St. Charles.*

1818.

Description of St. Louis . . . . . 161
The work of colonization . . . . . 163
State of religion in America . . . . . 164
Diocese of New Orleans . . . . . 166
Mother Duchesne's meeting with Mgr. Dubourg . . . 168
Poverty of the Bishop . . . . . 169
His apostolic labours . . . . . 170
She is sent to St. Charles . . . . . 171

PAGE

## CHAPTER XI.

*Mother Duchesne at St. Charles of Missouri. Her boundless zeal. Her little school. Her struggles against penury. Her heroic efforts baffled. The removal to Fleurissant.*

1818—1819.


Description of St. Charles of Missouri . . . . . 176
The Sacred Heart establishes itself there . . . . . 177
Encouragement from the Pope . . . . . 178
Religious and moral state of St. Charles . . . . . 180
Schools, the poor, the Indians, and negroes . . . . 183
Destitution of the nuns . . . . . 185
Mother Duchesne falls ill . . . . . 187
Fire and wonderful preservation . . . . . 188
The pupils at St. Charles . . . . . 189
Poverty obliges the nuns to leave St. Charles . . . 190


## CHAPTER XII.

*Mother Duchesne at Fleurissant. Her hospitality. The school. The Novitiate. Struggles and victory of the Sacred Heart. Its first novices.*

1819—1821.


Description of Fleurissant . . . . . 194
M. Delacroix chaplain to the nuns . . . . . 195
God alone . . . . . 197
M. de Andreis visits Fleurissant . . . . . 198
Hospitality to missionaries . . . . . 201
Fervour of the school . . . . . 203
Project of an American Novitiate . . . . . 204
Conquest by the cross—Illness . . . . . 205
The first American novice, Sister Mary Layton . . . 209
Eulalie and Mathilda Hamilton . . . . . 211
Vocations increase . . . . . 213
Progress of religion . . . . . 215


## CHAPTER XIII.

*Foundation of the house at Grand Coteau. Mrs. Smith's donation. Mother Audé's works and zeal. Arrival of Mothers Mathevon and Murphy.*

1821—1822.


Project of a foundation in the Opelousas . . . . 219
Mother Audé is named Superior . . . . . 220

PAGE
Her journey there . . . . . 221
Description of Grand Coteau, the property and house . . 222
Difficult condition attached to the gift . . . . 224
Mother Aude's work and illness . . . . . 225
Arrival of Mothers Mathevon and Murphy . . . 229
The novices at Grand Coteau . . . . . 231

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Mother Duchesne's journey to Grand Coteau. Her visit to Mother Audé. Her return. The yellow fever. The great dangers she encounters.*

July to October, 1822.

Journal of the voyage to Grand Coteau . . . . 232
Dangers encountered . . . . . 233
Arrival, happiness of the meeting . . . . . 236
Testimony to Mother Audé's success . . . . 237
The return. Yellow Fever . . . . . 238
Her dangerous illness—she is deprived of all help . . 242
She reaches Fleurissant . . . . . 243

## CHAPTER XV.

*The Apostolate at Fleurissant. The school deserted. Poverty of the Novitiate. The Jesuits at Fleurissant. Their spiritual direction. Schools for the poor and the Indians.*

1823—1825.

The school is deserted. Privations . . . . 247
Mother Duchesne's profound humility . . . . 249
The Novitiate increases. Its state of poverty . . . 250
The Jesuits arrive at Fleurissant . . . . . 252
Mother Duchesne assists them . . . . . 254
Father von Quickenborn's direction . . . . 257
Schools for the poor . . . . . 260
Apostolate among the Indians . . . . . 262
Spread of the Church amongst them . . . . 265

## CHAPTER XVI.

*Foundation at St. Michel. Madame Audé Superior. Reign of the Heart of Jesus. Approbation of the Institute by Leo XII.*

1826.

A foundation is asked for at New Orleans . . . . 269
Mother Audé is named Superior . . . . . 271

PAGE

She goes to St. Michel . . . . . 272
Its scenery and population . . . . . 273
The new house of the Sacred Heart . . . . 274
Installation at St. Michel . . . . . 275
Approbation of the Institute by Leo XII. . . . 276

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Foundation at St. Louis. The four houses in Louisiana. Progress of the American Church. Departure of Mgr. Dubourg.*

1827.

A site for a foundation offered at St. Louis . . . 279
Conditions of the gift . . . . . 280
Mother Duchesne directs the new house . . . . 281
Letters from France . . . . . 282
Poverty of the chapel . . . . . 282
Progress of the Society in America . . . . 284
Increase of Catholicism . . . . . 286
Mgr. Dubourg finally leaves America . . . . 287

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Foundation at Bayou la Fourche. Return and foundation at St. Charles. Mother Duchesne visits the houses of Louisiana. The Council of St. Michel.*

1828—1829.

Foundation at Bayou la Fourche . . . . . 290
The Sacred Heart returns to St. Charles . . . . 293
Mother Lucile Mathevon Superior . . . . 294
Mother Barat orders a Provincial Council . . . 296
Mother Duchesne visits the houses of Louisiana . . . 297
Prosperity of St. Michel under Mother Audé . . . 298
Mother Duchesne's false position . . . . . 299
Her visit and influence at Bayou la Fourche . . . 300
Mother Xavier Murphy . . . . . 301
Mother Duchesne's zeal for regular observance . . . 302
Her return. Meeting with M. l'Abbé Jeanjean . . . 305
Council of Baltimore, progress of the faith . . . 306

PAGE

CHAPTER XIX.

*The cholera at Grand Coteau. Death of Madame Octavie Berthold. Suppression of the Convent of Sainte Marie at Grenoble. Mother Duchesne leaves St. Louis.*

1831—1834.

Mother Duchesne asks for and obtains her resignation . . 310
Mgr. Rosati's reclamations. She is maintained . . . 312
Bayou la Fourche is suppressed . . . . . 313
The cholera at St. Michel . . . . . 314
Christian deathbeds . . . . . 315
Mother Octavie Berthold. Her trials and sufferings . . 317
Her long agony and death . . . . . 320
Mother Audé summoned to France . . . . 325
Suppression of Ste. Marie-d'en-Haut . . . . 327
Mother Duchesne removed to Fleurissant . . . . 328

CHAPTER XX.

*Residence at Fleurissant. Mother Duchesne's spiritual life. Her yearnings for death and for Heaven. She ceases to be Superior.*

1834—1840.

Her physical sufferings at Fleurissant . . . . 330
Her abnegation and life of poverty . . . . 331
Her mortification and hard work . . . . 333
Her humility, her method of prayer . . . . 336
Her love for God, for souls, and for the Society . . . 337
Her fidelity in friendships . . . . . 339
Her filial affection for Mother Barat . . . . 340
Her constant love for her family . . . . . 342
Her love for the Church, the Holy See, and the Pope . . 344
Zeal for the progress of the Church in America . . . 345
Crisis under President Jackson . . . . . 347
Mother Duchesne ceases to be Superior . . . . 351

CHAPTER XXI.

*Mother Duchesne's zeal for the Indians. She obtains permission to go to the Potowatomies. Her residence at Sugar Creek. Her apostolate of holiness, prayer, and suffering. She is recalled to the State of Missouri.*

1841—1842.

Missions amongst the Indians . . . . . 353
A house of the Sacred Heart in the Indian district . . 358

PAGE
Mother Duchesne is allowed to go . . . . . 361
Journey; solemn reception . . . . . 363
Moral and religious state of the Mission of Sugar Creek . . 366
Difficulties from the language, &c. . . . . 368
Education of the Indians—their great faith . . . 369
Mother Duchesne devotes herself to pray and suffer . . 370
She is recalled to Missouri . . . . . 372
Fruits of the work of the Sacred Heart . . . . 373

## CHAPTER XXII.

*Mother Duchesne's last days at St. Charles. Her life of solitude and prayer. Her preparation for eternity.*

1842—1852.

Her cell at St. Charles . . . . . 375
The house, threatened with suppression, is maintained . . 376
Fleurissant is suppressed . . . . . 377
Mother Barat's unaccountable silence . . . . 379
Mother Jouve visits and consoles her aunt . . . 381
Mother Hamilton's filial care . . . . . 384
Mother Duchesne's constant adoration . . . . 386
Her letters of direction . . . . . 387
Simplicity in education . . . . . 388
Her prayers for the missionaries . . . . . 389

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*The rewards of time and eternity. The development of the Institute of the Sacred Heart in America. Mother Duchesne's last days. Her holy death.*

1852.

Progress of Catholicism in the States . . . . . 392
Extension of the Society of the Sacred Heart . . . 394
Mother Barat attributes it to Mother Duchesne . . . 396
Her aspirations for Heaven . . . . . 398
Her preparation for death . . . . . 399
Her last farewell to Mother Barat and her family . . 401
Letter to Father de Smet . . . . . 403
Visit from Mother du Rousier . . . . . 405
Mother Duchesne gives her her blessing . . . . 405
Last moments and words . . . . . 406
Her funeral—her body preserved . . . . . 407
Fresh extension of the Sacred Heart . . . . 407
Time and eternity . . . . . 409

## CHAPTER I.

*Family and Birth of Madame Duchesne. Her Education at the Convent of St. Mary. Her Novitiate at the Visitation.*

1769—1791.

At the end of the last century a provincial middle class existed in France, which, through its industry and its practical knowledge was every day increasing in importance and wealth. Traditions of morality, domestic virtue, and numerous and prosperous families of hardworking children still marked it as belonging to the old-fashioned France of other days; but it was easy to see that a great change in it was at hand. Most of the men of this class were more or less influenced by the spirit of the times. They were beginning to feel their own rising influence, to dream of their accession to power, and to foresee that it was not far distant.

It was in the midst of this social state of things, and on the eve of the Revolution that Madame Duchesne was born. Several of her relations became eminent statesmen, whose names are recorded in history, and many of the women of her family were remarkable for their strong faith, energetic character, and mental gifts. Thanks to her natural qualities, and most especially to a devoted perseverance resulting from the deepest religious principles, the servant of God, whose life we are about to write, effected in the end greater things for the extension of the kingdom of our Lord than her kinsmen achieved for the triumph of their

political views, their own fame, or the advantage of their country.

The Duchesnes had been established for a number of years at Romans in the Drôme, and had acquired a world-wide commercial reputation as manufacturers of textures, which they sold and forwarded to every part of France and the colonies. They were a Christian family of the old school, and of more than ordinary piety, if we can judge of it by the number of nuns it successively furnished to the Convent of the Visitation in that small town. In 1770, Marie Fortunée Duchesne died at the age of twenty-eight in perfect peace, only regretting that she had neither done nor, as she thought, suffered anything for Jesus Christ, and entreating that after her death nothing should be said concerning her except prayers to obtain mercy for her from her Divine Spouse. Another Mademoiselle Duchesne, a pupil in the same convent, asked permission in her thirteenth year, when she felt herself dying, to receive the habit of the Order and to pronounce her vows on the day of her first Communion. Her sister Claire Julie, struck by this act, had renounced all her prospects in the world, and entered the same convent which she governed for many years, and whence she led a new colony into Franche-Comté. Many years before, in 1754, the Divine Lover of souls had, as it were, seized by the hand Mdlle. Françoise Mélanie Duchesne, on the threshold of the Visitation of Romans, which she had entered to make a retreat, and where she remained and consecrated herself for ever to the service of Jesus Christ. We find likewise amongst the religious of that family Marie Julie Tranchant, whom we shall meet with again in the course of this history, working with Madame Duchesne during the terrible days of the Revolution. If to belong to the generation of the righteous is, as has been said, in itself an advance in the direction of virtue, to belong to

a lineage of saints, must likewise be an advance on the road of sanctity. The help of such prayers as were no doubt put up for Madame Duchesne when an infant in her cradle, accounts for the early graces which we shall see descending upon that chosen soul. She was led, as it were, to the altar of God by a troop of virgin kinswomen, and it is not surprising that the Sacred Heart of our Lord vouchsafed to choose an apostle out of a family which had made Him already so many precious offerings.

M. Antoine Duchesne, the head of the mercantile family above described, had married Mdlle. Marie Louise Enfantin,* and had two sons, the eldest of whom carried on his father's business, whilst the youngest, Pierre François became a lawyer, and held a distinguished position in the Parliament of Grenoble, where his remarkable talents opened to him a brilliant career, and led the way to his marriage with a rich heiress, Mdlle. Rose Euphrosine Périer. Her family had been well known in commercial circles before its members reached the high political and financial position they were destined to hold in France. There was a marked similarity in this respect between them and the Duchesnes. As to Pierre François, he was not only gifted with extraordinary intellect and a talent for speaking, which placed him at the head of the bar at Grenoble, but he was also possessed of an indomitable strength of will, which seems to have been a peculiar characteristic in both the men and women of his family. We read in the notes of the Convent of the Visitation, which relate to the women of that lineage, "They were earnest, energetic souls, whom the old-fashioned system of education had cast into a strong mould. They had what was proverbially styled amongst us the *Duchesne character*, such as it had

* Father Enfantin, one of the most famous preachers of the Congregation of the Pères de la Foi, and Enfantin, the well known founder of the sect of the Saint Simoniens, both belonged to that family.

shown itself in all the members of that family who, for more than a century, had successively belonged to our community." We are obliged to admit that M. Duchesne employed this singular energy in the service of the philosophic and liberal views which the parliaments of that day so rashly advocated. His Christian principles had suffered deeply from this bias. Whether or not he retained a belief in the essential dogmas of religion and a general respect for Catholicism, he neglected the observance of its precepts, and we shall see in his daughter's life what strenuous efforts she had to make in order to bring him back to the service of God.

She was born, that child of his, on August 29, 1769, on the eve of the feast of St. Rose of Lima, whose name was given to her in baptism, together with that of Philippine, which sounds like an omen of her apostolic career. It was also an appropriate circumstance that she who was to be one day a missionary in America, should have for her special patron a virgin saint, whom the Church designates as "the first flower of sanctity produced by the New World."

It was probably with the view of placing her under a yet higher protection that her baptism was delayed until the 8th of September, feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. Her maternal uncle, Jean Antoine Périer, and her grandmother, Madame Jacques Périer, were her sponsors.

The old house of the Duchesnes still exists in the Place St. André, just opposite the church of the same name and the Gothic palace of the Counts of Dauphiné, transformed into a hall of justice. A covered passage leads from the street into the inner court of this old-fashioned abode. It is altered to suit modern tastes, but the grand staircase, the monastic appearance of the windows, grated like those of a convent, and the solemn aspect of the court on which they look give a correct idea of the austere

and modest mode of existence of wealthy merchants in the olden time. A door of communication between the houses of the Duchesnes and the Périers is still visible, though now walled up. It was in this conventual looking home, and under the shadow, as it were, of the collegiate church of St. André, her model in the love of the Cross, that Philippine spent her childhood.

God had given her a strong energetic nature, the thorough Duchesne character, as it was proverbially called at Grenoble, a stiff, imperious, uncompromising disposition, which it was easy to perceive would require years of training and virtue to subdue, if indeed it could be ever entirely conquered. But if once brought under control, what unspeakable good can be effected by such strong souls, when their whole power is directed to doing good. Early indications of a generous spirit were visible in the little Philippine. She was naturally unselfish and capable of self-devotion. One of her sisters tells us that she was a beautiful child, but that at three years old the small-pox altered her good looks. This gave her no regrets in after-life; she used to delight in her sister's beauty and in the admiration she excited, and never seemed to covet for herself the same attractions. There were no feminine weaknesses in her character, but on the other hand all a woman's tenderness of heart, which began early to show itself by a warm love for the poor. She gave them everything she could, and as soon as she was allowed pocket-money it was instantly bestowed on the beggars who thronged her father's door. "But we give you this money for your own little pleasures," her parents would say. "But if it is my greatest pleasure to give it away?" the little girl would argue.

In mind, as in heart, Philippine was old for her age. She had none of the frivolous tastes of children, and did not care for their usual amusements. Her doll was

laid aside very early, and at nine years of age we hear of her reading aloud to an elder sister, confined to her bed by illness, and choosing Roman history for the entertainment of the invalid. She probably found something congenial to her own spirit in the character of a nation of which it could be said, *Facere et pati fortia, Romanum est.*

This tendency to admire great and heroic deeds soon found worthier objects than the achievements of Roman heroes. She wrote in after-life : "My first enthusiasm for missionary life was excited by the conversations of a good Jesuit Father who had been labouring in Louisiana, and used to tell us stories about the savages. I was only eight years old at that time, but I already thought it must be a great happiness to be a missionary."

The French colony, known at that time by the general name of Louisiana, extended from the basin of the Mississippi to the region of the Lakes. Bloody had been the annals of religion in that quarter of the globe, and the Jesuit Father, Madame Duchesne speaks of, was indeed able to relate incidents well adapted to kindle the latent fire in her young soul. The Jesuits had been the principal martyrs during that missionary epoch. Père Rasles, for instance, had been shot, scalped, and cut in pieces by a troop of bandits, under the orders of three English officers at the very foot of the cross which he had planted in the midst of his converted Abnakis. The pagans of the Natchez tribe had also exercised great cruelties on the French missionaries. Père Du Poisson had been decapitated, Père Souel shot, and his bloody cassock carried about as a banner by the insurgents. Père Doutreleau, the Apostle of the Illinois, assailed during his Mass on the banks of the Yasous, had to fly for his life robed in his vestments, and escaped in a boat, though fired upon from every side. Fearful sacrileges were committed by the savages, whom the French armies severely punished, and

then followed more peaceful times, and the blood of the martyrs produced its wonted fruits. Numerous converts were made on the banks of the Missouri; the zealous Sulpician Picquet evangelized portions of North America, and a great harvest of souls rewarded the indefatigable labours of the missionaries. Philippine listened with a beating heart to their narratives. "I envied their dangers," she says; "for at that time I was reading the lives of the martyrs." Like St. Theresa in her childhood, she was already experiencing that thirst for martyrdom which fills some chosen souls. The first spark of that fire which was one day to burn so vividly was kindled in those hours of social converse.

Up to that time Philippine's education had been carried on by her mother, a thoroughly "valiant woman," who united to a vigour of intellect inherent in the Périer family, a truly Christian spirit. But the cares of an increasing family did not allow her sufficient time to instruct her daughter, and she felt the necessity of intrusting her to other hands. The Convent of the Visitation possessed hereditary claims to the confidence of the Duchesnes, and it was in their school at Ste. Marie-d'en-Haut, near Grenoble, that she placed her dear child.

This religious home, which occupies so important a place in Madame Duchesne's history, is situated on the left bank of the Isère, half way up the ascent of Mount Rachais. A steep winding street, lined on both sides by dismal looking houses, dating from the time of the League, leads to a sudden turning, opposite to which stands an archway, surmounted by the following inscription: "St. Francis of Sales chose this place for the foundation of the fourth monastery of his Order of the Visitation of St. Mary. The first stone of it was laid in his presence on October 16, 1619."

We accordingly find in the memoirs of Mère de Chaugy

that St. Francis of Sales came in the month of February, 1618, to preach for the second time during Lent at Grenoble, and that he was then earnestly requested to establish there his Daughters of the Visitation of St. Mary. "Our blessed Father," she adds, "wrote then to our most worthy Mother (Madame de Chantal) to come and join him, which she did, accompanied by some of her religious, on April 7, 1618. They decided on the purchase of a place called Chalmont, very high up, out of the way, and secluded from the town, although within its precincts. She received there some postulants, and established as Superior our very worthy Mother Péronne Marie de Chatel."

At the time that Madame Duchesne went to school there the old convent preserved both the aspect and the spirit of its early days. It was one of those retreats that seemed placed, so to speak, above this earth, and nearer to Heaven than other abodes. It was such a spot as souls careless of the world and athirst for God would choose as their dwelling place. A dark passage led from the entrance door into a cloistered square, surrounding a court divided into grass plots, with two wells in the centre, and a stone cross between them. On one side of this court were steps which descended to the door of the nuns' choir. There in an angle is still to be seen St. Francis' humble confessional and St. Jane Frances of Chantal's stall, her prie-Dieu, and the place where she was kneeling when a heavenly voice whispered in her ear: "He is dead! he is dead!" at the very hour when the saintly Bishop of Geneva had yielded up his soul to God. The church adorned by the munificent generosity of the Duc de Lesdiguières had then, and to this day possesses, its marble altar and reredos, its sculptured stalls and carved pulpit, and the frescoes of the roof which represent the mysteries of the Gospel and the origin of the convent. Neither time nor revolutions have effaced these memories of the past.

Above the house rise the sharp, angular and bleak heights of Rabot, shutting out the view on that side, whereas in the opposite direction a magnificent panorama exhibits a boundless expanse of the most varied scenery. From the terrace which formed the children's playground they looked upon the whole of the rich valley of Grésivaudan, which embraces the most picturesque variety of natural beauty, backed by the snow-capped summits of the Alps.

At the time when Philippine went to the convent the community consisted of about thirty-five choir religious, ten lay-Sisters, and twenty scholars. The name of the Reverend Mother was Marie d'Auberjon de Murinais, an excellent religious, who at the age of seventeen had entered the community, and been ever since a model and a guide to its members. She was efficiently assisted by her sister Marie Delphine, but it was to Madame Latier de Bayanne that Philippine was most indebted during the time of her education.

She learned from her that piety which is grounded on faith, the origin of all light, and on the fear of God, the beginning of all wisdom. We are told by her sister that faith had completely taken possession of her soul, and that the fear of God made her shun everything which could offend the Divine sight. It was deemed in those days that in all true piety the spirit of fear must precede the spirit of love, and always remain united to it. "The first effect of love," Pascal says, "is to inspire great reverence. We venerate what we love, and this is as it should be. There is nothing so great in our eyes."

As to the love of our Lord, Philippine derived it, so to speak, from everything she saw, heard, and read in that place. In no convent of the Visitation did the worship of the Sacred Heart exhibit itself in such a multitude of ancient and significant symbols as in the house of Ste. Marie-d'en-Haut. In its chapel she saw on each side of

the altar two statues, one of our Lord pointing to His Divine Heart, and the other of St. Francis of Sales holding in his hand a burning heart: tokens of the love of God for man and the love of man for God. The marble of the altar, the arch of the sanctuary, the very pavement of the church were marked with that sacred emblem. A long passage leading to the tribune, and ornamented with ancient paintings and inscriptions coeval with the foundation of the convent, formed a sort of catechism of Divine love. On the roof and the walls images and maxims exhibited the history of the Divine goodness during the course of centuries from the time of the creation to that of the institution of the Holy Eucharist. The last of these paintings, the one nearest to the chapel, summed up, as it were, the pictured narrative by representing the wounded Heart of our Lord with the flames, the cross, and the crown of thorns. Two texts from the Book of Isaias gave the explanation of these symbols: "He was wounded for our iniquities;" "You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains."* This gallery is a perfect poem of the love of Jesus Christ.

At twelve years of age Philippine made her first Communion. In that solemn hour when her Lord gave Himself entirely to her soul, she felt the first rising desire to give herself entirely to Him. Her generous character could not conceive the idea of an incomplete offering, or of hesitating to make an absolute surrender of her whole being. She could not see any means to it but the religious life, or any end to it but eternity, and the consecration of her soul and body made that day was never retracted. "From that time forward," her sister says, "she always looked upon the world as a place of exile, and the religious life as the only one that could answer to the yearnings of her soul.

A spiritual writer has said, "It is on our knees, with our

* Isaias liii. and xii.

foreheads in the dust, and with a burning and fervent heart, that we must receive the first indications of a religious vocation."* It was thus that Philippine received it in the deepest spirit of humility and gratitude. She tells us herself that from the age of twelve, when God gave her the grace of vocation, she does not remember having ever allowed a single day to pass without praying for light from God as to His Divine will in her regard, and for strength to act up to it. It was under the protection of the Blessed Virgin that she placed her vocation, and for this object she was continually reciting the *Memorare*.

But it was not only by wishes and prayers that she prepared for this sublime calling. Her school life henceforward became a sort of apprenticeship to the religious life. One of her contemporaries relates, "She was continually praying before the Blessed Sacrament, and her fervour led her to get up every day at the same hour as the nuns, in order to be in the choir and make her meditation at the same time as theirs. Sometimes in the very middle of winter she would hurry there only half dressed rather than omit the practice or shorten her hour of prayer. Her companions, who did not know the strength of her will, used to laugh at this great zeal, and to prophesy that it would soon flag, but nothing ever made her give up this habit; as long as she remained at school she was faithful to it.

But even then, beyond the general desire of the religious life, arose like a more remote line of mountains towering above another, in the dim and shadowy distance, visions of a yet higher perfection. The attraction she had felt in her early childhood for an apostolic life continued to derive strength from her conversation with the holy priest who had been the first means of awakening it. She often went to confession to him, and relished the familiar and

* Monseigneur Gay, *De la vie et des vertus chrétiennes*, vol. i. p. 78.

simple mode of speaking which he had acquired during his ministry amongst the savages. From that time forward she could not hear without a thrill the words Propaganda, Foreign Missions, or the names of the priests and nuns who were about to depart for distant scenes of apostolic labour.

But the time had come when in that soul, which God's spirit was so ardently filling with Divine graces, the cold hard blasts of contradiction were about to perform their life-giving office. Often and often in Madame Duchesne's life we find them thus at work. Her parents, having been informed of their daughter's inclination towards the religious life, determined to nip it in the bud by taking her away from Sainte Marie and keeping her at home. This was in her mother's case simply the result of affection, but her father was probably influenced by his philosophical prejudices against religious orders. Without arguing against the feelings of one parent or the opinions of the other, the young girl submitted to their will, and came home, with the hope, however, that her firm resolution, aided by time and the grace of God, would in the end find means of accomplishment.

At first her parents must have been entirely satisfied, for, as far as appearances went, Philippine seemed to follow completely their lead. Her sister tells us that "She went out into the world, attended concerts, which she delighted in, and was very fond of dancing. Later on she declared that even at a ball she was always thinking of the happiness it would be to become a nun, but in the meantime she took real pains with her dancing lessons. Even in this she evinced the earnestness of her character, and would seriously apply herself to learn the most difficult steps, looking all the time as if she was studying algebra."

At that time Philippine's relations on her mother's side were entering on an era of great worldly prosperity. This

accession of fortune kept pace with the large increase of a numerous family, which made the social existence of the two households of Duchesne and Périer full of life and animation. In her sisters, Amélie and Charlotte Euphrosine, and her cousin Mdlle. Périer, Philippine found three most congenial friends. The deepest and most lasting attachment always united her to this cousin, then sixteen years of age, who, under the name of Madame de Savoie-Rollin, became distinguished for her strong understanding, her excellent heart, and boundless charity, the memory of which is still gratefully preserved in the town of Grenoble. Philippine in subsequent days was not one of those least indebted to her generous munificence. All these ladies were as remarkable in their generation for their Christian virtues in the world as their relatives had been in former times for their holy lives in the cloister.

In the meantime M. Claude Périer anxiously directed the education of his eight sons. He was as good a manager of time as of money, and did not suffer his children to waste that precious treasure. The square turret where they were kept hard at their books under the care of a learned priest, M. l'Abbé Raillane, is still to be seen. Thanks to the influence of this holy priest, and still more to their mother's care, the young Périers were brought up in the fear of God. Anxious to profit by the lessons her cousins received from learned masters, Philippine asked and obtained leave to attend them, and thus complete her studies. Everything tended to give to this remarkable woman an almost manly energy of mind and character.

She learnt, for instance, Latin, especially with the desire of reading the Holy Scriptures in that language, and arithmetic, which M. Périer particularly insisted upon in the education of his sons. She studied music likewise, but without success. There was neither in her mind nor in her hands the softness, flexibility, and minute shadowing

requisite for that art. Drawing she delighted in, and her sister says that if she had been taught by a good master she would have excelled in it. As it was, her efforts in that line did not rise above mediocrity. No doubt that the most remarkable of Madame Duchesne's gifts was that of writing, a gift, not an art, for her style was always singularly natural and spontaneous, but sometimes hardly grammatical. Strength and power mark it with a sort of rough energy akin to the ardent soul and iron will which distinguished her.

Philippine's parents were flattering themselves with the hope of keeping out of the convent a daughter so likely to succeed in the world. Not that she in the least degree relaxed her strict fidelity in the observance of the religious rules she had set herself. Her sister says that ever since her return from school she went to confession and Communion every fortnight, a rather peculiar practice at a time when Jansenist prejudices kept the faithful aloof from Holy Communion, and under pretext of reverence left pious souls to die of thirst near the fountain of life. In that Divine Sacrament Philippine found the strength constantly to renew her resolution to devote herself entirely to our Lord; but she maintained, her sister says, a complete silence about her vocation in order not to rouse the opposition of her parents on this painful subject.

But the hour came when it was necessary to speak out. Philippine was seventeen years of age, proposals of marriage had been made for her younger sister, and M. and Madame Duchesne thought it proper to begin by finding a husband for Philippine. They proposed a suitable match, and pressed her to accept it. She refused; not that she had any objection to the person in question, but simply on account of her vocation to the religious life. Her parents said nothing more on the subject; they still hoped that time would alter her determination. Their expecta-

tions were however deceived. Having now openly declared her intentions, Philippine began to conform her conduct to the end she had in view. From that time forward she ceased to mix in the world, and dressed in the plainest possible manner, evincing in her refusals to accept invitations and in the regularity of her religious practices an amount of rigidity which belongs to an exaggerated strength of character such as we shall have often occasion to notice in this earnest-minded soul.

It was to her aunt Périer, a woman full of faith and capable of appreciating a generous resolution, that Philippine confided her projects. They both perceived that her relations were beginning to be convinced of the reality of her vocation, and in consequence were less opposed to it; the moment to act seemed arrived. It was just a year since Philippine had announced her intention to her parents, and one day she begged her aunt to take her to Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut in order to consult the Superior about her admission. They went there together, but once in the house, the young girl felt herself so powerfully grasped, as it were, by a Divine hand, that she told her aunt she could not leave the convent. Madame Périer began by struggling against this resolution, but she was obliged to give way to her niece's determination and to go and break the matter to Madame Duchesne. The poor mother shed many tears, but she was a pious Christian and very much attached to Madame Périer, so "she could not find fault," she said, "with what her dear sister had done."

But her resignation almost gave way when some days afterwards she visited her child at the convent with the rest of the family and saw her only through the grating. The same sister relates that "the interview was heartbreaking." Madame Duchesne had a peculiarly strong affection for this noble-hearted and high-minded daughter, and she told her in the most moving terms how terribly she missed her in

the home circle, adding that as she was the eldest of her unmarried daughters, and gifted with so much piety, ability, and good sense, she had reckoned upon her assistance in the education of a new little sister born that very year. The young postulant met in a quiet and firm manner the arguments of her parents, but a terrible struggle was going on in her heart between earthly affection and Divine inspiration. At last, after taking leave of her family, she hastened to the foot of the altar and with many tears thanked our Lord that He had enabled her to win the victory in that conflict with herself. She then renewed her consecration through the intercession of Saint Jane Frances of Chantal, Foundress of the Order in which she intended to live and to die.

This was in 1787. Philippine was received by the same Superior who had educated her, the Reverend Mother de Murinais, who had been re-elected in 1785. This venerable nun gave her the veil, and according to the rule of the Institute she was at once admitted into the choir.

Later on, in stating the motives of her entrance into the Order of the Visitation, Philippine ascribed it in the first place to the wish she felt to work for souls by means of the education of young girls in the convent school. "This it was," she said, "that made me choose it in preference to Mount Carmel, which I very much loved."

The apostolical life was always the origin of all her aspirations. This gave her an enthusiastic admiration for the Society of Jesus; the combination of the perfect and the active element in that Order filled her with holy envy. She wrote as follows: "The Community of Sainte Marie was full of the spirit of the Jesuits. It was its boast that the Constitutions of the Order were modelled on those of St. Ignatius. Most of their writings were in the library of the convent. During the two years of my novitiate I read

nothing but Rodriguez and never tired of it. During the conferences held by the nuns after Vespers, I related to my companions, one after another, the lives of almost all the Saints of the Society of Jesus, and especially St. Francis Xavier's history which was the one I cared most about. How often I used to say to him in my impatience: 'Great Saint, why do you not call me to follow you? I would do so at once.' He was my favourite Saint."

Whilst with St. Francis Xavier she yearned for the conversion of infidel nations, she longed to devote herself, like St. Francis Regis, to the poor and the outcast. "It was at the same time," she writes, "that I became devout to St. Francis Regis. A religious who had taken him for her patron saint inspired me with this devotion. I often prayed before a relic of his which our monastery possessed. His labours, less famous than those of St. Francis Xavier, seemed to be more within reach of imitation. It was for his sake that later on I began to teach the poor."

In the meantime she edified her convent by the example of a heart as free and as ardent as the flame which burns before the altar, as detached as possible from the world and self, and entirely given up to the service of God and the good of others. She was able to declare at a subsequent period that on her entrance into the house of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut she had made the resolution not to infringe a single rule, and did not remember ever having done so." Not satisfied with the strict performance of her own duties, she was always ready to oblige and to assist everybody else. After days of incessant labour Philippine used to forget all fatigue, and to beg her Superior's permission to delay her bed-time so as to spend with our Lord an hour in prayer, which her charity towards her neighbour had deprived her of during the day. It was easy to know if her request was granted by the joy which beamed in her face and the way in which she smiled to the Sisters who met her on her way

to the chapel. This privilege was rest and happiness to her. Sometimes she forgot herself in the presence of our Lord and spent nearly the whole night in silent adoration before her Hidden Spouse. The foot of the altar was ever Madame Duchesne's abiding-place.

After a novitiate of about a year and a half, Philippine was on the point of being professed, when her father absolutely forbade it, but not on account of his prejudice against convents. Though he was by no means a pious man, he had enough respect for religion not to oppose his daughter's will on this point if public affairs had been in a less alarming state. But nothing could be more dark and threatening than their aspect. Philippine was herself but too well aware of the important events which were occurring almost under her eyes, and in which her own relatives had participated. It was in her native city and almost under her father's roof that the first revolutionary steps had been taken. The parliament of Grenoble, where M. Duchesne occupied a distinguished place, had issued a protestation against the royal edicts, which had been followed by an insurrection that had stained with blood the streets of the capital of Dauphiné. This was on June 7, 1788. It was the first battle of the French Revolution. Soon afterwards Philippine's uncle, M. Périer, lent the tennis court of his Château de Vizille to the Notables of the Province for the famous Assembly of the 21st of July where Mounier and Barnave kindled the flame that was before long to bring about a general conflagration. It was impossible to foresee how far the movement would extend, but it seemed probable that the hostile party which was attacking the monarchy would soon direct its efforts against the Church and especially the religious orders. M. Duchesne, well acquainted as he was with the spirit of those he was acting with, could estimate the amount of the danger, and in order to gain time declared to his daughter that he

would not consent to her being professed before the age of twenty-five. All he would concede was that she should remain at Sainte Marie as a novice till the course of years or of events decided the question.

This was a great blow to Philippine. "I saw no light in the future," she wrote in after days, "and the trial of the moment seemed to me the hardest God could have sent me." A very wise priest, to whom she spoke of her grief, did not take the same view of it. "Let us adore the will of God, my child," he said; "He knows what He is doing and the future result of what He permits. You will understand this hereafter."

Less than two years afterwards the storm which had been so long brewing broke with violence all over France. It fell as usual on the highest and holiest summits. The religious orders were proscribed. In the beginning of the year 1791 the Nuns of the Visitation were called upon to renounce the religious life or to abandon their monastic home. Mother d'Auberjon Murinais sent in answer on the 14th of January a protestation signed by all the Sisters, in which they unanimously declared that they persisted in the observance of their vows and were determined to live and die in their holy state. This decided their expulsion. The Duchesne family, in expectation of the violent measures threatened against the convent, hastened to remove their daughter from it. Philippine's sorrow was intense, and she expressed it in the Scriptural language she was wont to use. "O Sion," she exclaimed, "shall I never see thee again? O Lord, wilt thou not break the bonds that detain me amongst the children of Kedar?" As France denied her the privilege of dwelling in the house of God, she implored permission to seek it in another land, in Italy, for instance, where her dear friend, Mother Eugénie de Bayanne, was at the head of one of the Convents of the Visitation. But her parents would not consent to her departure; she was

therefore obliged to give up the religious habit and to retire with her family to a country house, where they sought shelter during the terrible days which ensued.

## CHAPTER II.

*Madame Duchesne during the Revolution. Her heroic devotion to prisoners, to children, and to the sick. She repurchases the Convent of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut.*

1791—1801.

THE country house where M. Duchesne established his family was at Granne, a small property which he possessed in the department of the Drôme not far from the towns of Crest and Romans. It was situated on the declivity of a hill, above which towered the ruins of an old feudal castle. Woods and gardens surrounded this pleasant residence, where relatives and friends were wont to congregate during the summer months. The parish church of Granne was almost like a crypt, the pavement being beneath the level of the soil. Its highest ornament in Madame Duchesne's eyes was a picture representing her two favourite saints, St. Francis Xavier and St. Francis Regis. In her daily visits to this church she never omitted invoking these two Apostles, and she inspired all the household with the same devotion. "We used," she said, "to add their names to the Litanies. In one of my father's books I found St. Francis Xavier's prayer for the conversion of infidels. This was twenty-four years ago, and since then I have said it regularly every day. I also said the prayers of the first saints of the Society of Jesus for missionaries. It was in the neighbouring town of Louvesc that St. Francis Regis died, and his picture was to be found in almost every

house. He went in that country by the name of the 'holy Father.' She adds that nearly every pious person was in the habit of visiting his tomb. Many went there every year. Her own heart longed to pay the Saint this homage, but her family thought a journey of twelve or fourteen leagues too great an undertaking, and the wished-for journey was delayed.

Two members of the then suppressed Society of Jesus living at Granne had advised her to make this pilgrimage. "I often consulted them about my vocation and they encouraged me to persevere in it," writes Philippine. A cousin of Madame Duchesne's, Marie Julie Tranchant, a nun of the Convent of the Visitation at Romans, sought at that time a refuge at Granne. It was as if God had sent a sister to Philippine. She had indeed never acted up more thoroughly to the spirit of her vocation than since she had been obliged to leave her Convent. Every one of the most minute rules of the Visitation she exactly observed; always rising at the same hour, saying the same prayers and office, and fasting every Wednesday with inflexible regularity. Some of her friends complained of this monastic austerity and deemed it exaggerated, but Madame Duchesne's generous and devoted kindness to all those she lived with made them forgive what they called her rigorism. The education of her little sister Mélanie, then four or five years of age, was at that time her principal occupation. The lessons and the example of her holy life made so great an impression on this child that she too was inspired with a vocation for the religious life, and became eventually a nun in the Convent of the Visitation at Romans. She died there on the 11th of January, 1828.

As the persecution increased in violence, it became more and more difficult to secure spiritual assistance at Granne, but Providence provided in a wonderful manner for the needs of the pious inmates. A stranger called one

day on M. Duchesne and offered his services as superintendent of the works for the erection of some mills which that gentleman was about to build on his property. The evident capacity he evinced induced M. Duchesne to accept his offer. He employed him in this and other ways and was so well pleased with him that he kept him at Granne and made him his agent. This clever man of business was none other than the Abbé Poidebard, a holy and learned priest who had barely escaped the guillotine, and was turning his abilities to account for the support of his existence. During his residence in the Duchesne family he gave them solid religious instruction and directed the daughters; one of them, who was afterwards Madame Lebrument, always said that she owed to him the faith and piety of her early years. By night in one of the most secluded parts of the house he used to say Mass and to give Holy Communion to our Lord's faithful and devoted servants. About that time Philippine had the great sorrow of losing her mother. A letter to one of her sisters addressed in 1793 to the *Citoyenne* Mauduit alludes to this bereavement. During the whole of her illness Madame Duchesne was nursed by the devoted daughter who, in other days, had left her for God. She died in her arms, comforted and supported by her to the last. God was beginning by degrees to sever the ties which still bound Philippine to the world. Having been put in possession of part of her fortune, she generously gave up to her sister, Madame de Mauduit, her share of the estate of Granne, and to her brothers and sisters all the landed property left by their mother, in return for a small annuity which they agreed to pay her. "After a great misfortune had placed me in possession of a fortune," she wrote to her sister, "I thought the best way to enjoy it was to give it up. Heavenly hopes were what I kept as my portion. I wish this letter to bear witness against me if questions

of interest were ever to divide us, and if I did not show myself ready to enter into whatever arrangements you considered most to your advantage."

Soon afterwards Philippine left Granne and went to Romans to stay with her grandmother and take care of her. But she did not know what an impossible task she had undertaken. This good lady carried to the most despairing degree the intractable wilfulness of the Duchesne character. From morning to night she did nothing but quarrel with her tenants and her servants, one of whom excited Philippine's admiration by her unwearied patience. "I am wondering all day," she wrote, "at *la Rosé's* wonderful equanimity; when most provoked she only says, '*Quella poura femme fa compassion.*' She is a perfect lamb of a woman, a model of patience and peacefulness. I encourage her and have made her promise not to give up her place. No one else would put up with it." The young granddaughter was not so patient as the servant-maid, she felt it impossible to remain, and to her great relief was released from the embarrassment of withdrawing of her own accord, for at the end of a few weeks the old lady dismissed her in a most unequivocal manner.

This brief sojourn at Romans suggested to Philippine the following reflections, which we find in a letter of hers to Madame de Mauduit. "In observing the change which advancing years have made in our grandmothers, I cannot refrain, dear sister, from some melancholy thoughts. We are of the same race, and already often feel in ourselves symptoms of their impetuous disposition. How much I fear that the resemblance may increase in time, and make us one day the bane and the torment of our families. Let us try to overcome this tendency, and to resist the first temptations to a fault which grows with age and becomes at last incorrigible. Let us endeavour not to expect too much from our neighbours, for in this life perfection cannot

be found, and we shall always have to put up with the defects of others." If the lesson was applicable to herself, it was still more needed by the sister to whom Madame Duchesne was writing. Madame de Mauduit was a kind-hearted and most charitable person. Her tender attentions to the sick were notorious. No one could doctor them so well or dress their wounds so gently, but tradition likewise reports that she was terribly imperious. Her husband, a peaceable captain of dragroons, who had preserved the courteous style and manners of the old régime, suffered from her *brusquerie.* He used to say that he could more easily rule his soldiers than his wife, and he was not supposed often to make the latter attempt.

Soon after her departure from Romans, Philippine made a retreat at Saint-Marcellin, and then went back to Grenoble to the house of an aunt of hers who lived there. Her object was to devote herself to the salvation of others and the re-establishment of religion until the times allowed of her returning to the cloister. She consulted on the subject the two Jesuit Fathers with whom she had continued to correspond, and one of them wrote to her, "that it was a project which God would bless." He added that a prediction made by the Venerable Labre, when he passed through the Vivarais, led him to hope for the re-establishment of religion in France.

Her family were not equally pleased with this new plan, which rather took them by surprise. "Why had she not remained with her old grandmother?" they said; "and now she wanted to leave her father!" It was probably Madame de Mauduit who remonstrated, for we find an admirable letter to her in which Philippine clearly shows how generous and unselfish were the feelings which had prompted her resolution. She begins by explaining that it was her grandmother who had sent her away, and then goes on to say: "In the retreat I made at Saint-Marcellin, I tried

to divest myself of all eager desires, of all attachment to my own views and all merely human feeling. How can it be human feelings which prompt a resolution to overcome them and to rise above their pleadings, in order to answer a higher call. Thus despoiled of all bias, I tried to ascertain the Divine will and made my resolve." With regard to her father she owns that the thought of leaving him is like a dagger in her heart, and that she will never cease to feel this suffering. "I know," she adds, "not having the strength of religion to help him, he will always resent the step I take, and that I shall carry to the grave the anguish of afflicting him. This grief will take away from me all enjoyment and embitter the sweetest moments of my life. A sense of his present position checked the eagerness of my desires, but higher views have overcome these hesitations. The fact is that I have no power to console him and to make his life peaceful and happy; but, by devoting myself entirely to God, Who overrules every event and sways the hearts of men, I can do more for my father than by my presence and my affectionate attentions. I have often prayed that the suffering of this separation may fall on me alone, that I may feel it in all its bitter extent, and that the merit of this sacrifice may obtain for my family union, peace, and happiness." She ends by begging Madame de Mauduit to supply her place with regard to their father and to soften his feelings towards herself, and then she tells her that she has found a companion, one who has been a religious; that they are going to hire a little lodging and live in a quiet obscure manner, supporting themselves by needlework and the sale of good books, with a view to the re-establishment of Christ's kingdom in France. As soon as she arrived at Grenoble, Philippine hastened to visit her dear old convent home of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut. It had been turned into a prison, and was at that moment crowded with victims awaiting execu-

tion. Amongst them were ladies of rank, Mesdames de Brissac, de Chichiliane, and de Calaman; men of high birth, M. de Gramont-Caderousse, for instance; venerable nuns like Madame Peret, foundress of the Ursulines at Grenoble, and several holy priests, amongst whom was M. l'Abbé de Lagrée, dragging on a weary existence with a sword continually hanging over their heads.

One of the most admirable of these prisoners was M. Ravenas, formerly Curé of Tolissieux, in the diocese of Gex. After having secretly exercised his ministry for some time in Dauphiné, he was arrested at Saint-Marcellin, carried to Grenoble, and thrown into the prison of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut with a companion of his apostolate, Joseph Martin Guillabert, who was also to share his martyrdom. He had often been called during his heroic ministrations to give help and consolation to the faithful in the town of Romans and its neighbourhood, and had probably often met Mdlle. Duchesne.

Be this as it may, she did not rest until she had formed, with some of her courageous companions, an association for procuring temporal and spiritual assistance for the confessors of the faith. These brave women took the name of *Dames de la Miséricorde.* Mdlle. Duchesne was the most zealous of them all. "She was not afraid," one of her first daughters in religion tells us, "of entering into the darkest cells where the prisoners were confined, and rendering them all the services of the humblest servant. One day," she adds, "having visited some imprisoned priests, she conversed a long time with them about her Divine Spouse; and when, later on, she spoke of this conversation, it was easy to see what a fire it had kindled in her soul."

In a sketch of the life of M. Ravenas a circumstance is related which throws light on the preceding statement. "The friends of the prisoner at Grenoble," it relates

"hastened to visit him. One of them, the especial comforter of the captives, was looking very sad. 'Well, my child,' M. Ravenas said, 'what changes have taken place during the last fortnight!' Then, seeing that she was weeping, he added, 'You are not going, I hope, to depress me by your sorrow? Is it not a great grace to die for the faith? And you, who wish me well, will you grieve over my happiness?' 'On the contrary,' replied the generous girl, 'I envy that happiness, and what makes me grieve is that I cannot also die for our Lord.' 'Oh, then I am satisfied and pleased with you,'" was M. Ravenas' answer. The name of this holy person is not mentioned, but we recognize in this little incident Mdlle. Duchesne's spirit of faith and her great courage.

These confessors met death with the joy of the early martyrs. When M. Guillabert was told that a Mass had been secretly offered up for him, he said: "The Blood of the Lamb offered up for me makes me ashamed of hesitating to shed mine. I have derived from that holy Sacrifice a strength which will support me, I trust, until I enter on an eternal life." M. Ravenas, when he was moved from Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut to the cellars of the Conciergerie, called them the antechamber of Paradise. He died on the scaffold on the 26th of June, 1794, and his last words were, "Blessed be Jesus, for Whom I die! I give Him back life for life and love for love."

It was not enough for Philippine to visit the apostles of Christ. She became in her turn an apostle in order to supply their loss, and would only have been too happy to die for the same cause and in the same way. This desire made her hasten to leave her aunt's house in order to establish herself in the lodging she and her companions had taken. Her sister relates that every day after she had performed her spiritual duties, Philippine visited the sick, for whom it was extremely difficult in those unhappy times

to obtain religious assistance. Braving every danger, she made her way to the hiding-places of the faithful and outlawed priests, and conducted them to the beds of the dying. It would be impossible to describe how much heroic charity she exercised on these occasions. One day, for instance, foreseeing that a poor woman whose end was approaching would not be able to receive the sacraments where she was, she carried her to her own lodging, and laid her in the bed in which she and the destitute religious who lived with her used to sleep. They both spent the night on their knees praying for the poor woman, who died in their arms. Such acts as these were frequent in Philippine's life at that time, and many of her nights were spent either by the side of the sick or in some place where the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was secretly offered up. Her relatives, alarmed at the audacity of her zeal, used to warn her of the consequences. But she never cared for anything but the happiness of serving her Divine Lord in the person of His suffering children.

At last the days arrived when France began to make efforts towards recovery. The Duchesne family took an active part in that crisis, and turned to account in political affairs their practical knowledge of business. In 1795 M. Claude Périer and M. Pierre François Duchesne were elected deputies to the legislative body. M. Duchesne, whose character was remarkably independent, distinguished himself by an ardent opposition to the *coup-d'état* of the 18th Brumaire. He became one of the members of the Tribunate, and was several times named President. With Carnot he voted against the life Consulate, and, when vanquished in that struggle, returned to Grenoble, convinced that there was an end of liberty for France, but unchanged in his convictions.

His daughter's ambition was of a different sort, and aimed at higher ends. Anxious to labour for the restoration

of the kingdom of Christ, and to procure for it new subjects, she often sighed after the Foreign Missions, but it was impossible to carry out these wishes at a time when every sea was closed to French vessels. The restoration of the French Chartreuse was another of her desires, and for several years running she said every day the Collect of St. Bruno for that intention. "But," she adds, "it was rather the return of the Carthusians than our establishment in their monastery that I asked. God inspired me, perhaps, to join my prayers to theirs. At that time it seemed as if He gave me presentiments, the end of which I did not discern, but which urged me to pray; for since those holy solitaries have returned to their home I have forgotten even the words of the prayer I used to say in their behalf." How many secret petitions of this sort may have contributed to the work of the restoration of the Church in France!

But in the midst of this variety of interior wishes and projects one dear image ever predominated in Mdlle. Duchesne's mind, and that was the recollection of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut. "The world," she wrote, "was always a land of exile to me; and my Sion, my home, was the constant object of my desires and my dearest projects; I longed to dwell again in the sanctuary, and my special attraction was towards that abode where I had first known the joys of piety." And again: "I never lost the love of my vocation. From the time of our dispersion several religious orders in different countries attracted my attention, and in my prayers I asked to know the will of God on that subject. I sometimes changed my place of residence, and lived with a variety of people, but was never engrossed so as to lose sight of my high hopes."

In the meantime Providence opened a new field to the zeal of the servant of God. It had led her during the Reign of Terror to devote herself to works of mercy in behalf of persecuted priests, of prisoners, and martyrs, and

now it suggested to her the thought of labouring for the poorest, most neglected and ignorant children, in imitation of one of the most popular of saints, the great patron and model of this sort of apostolate. She thus describes this inspiration: "I availed myself of a journey I made to Romans in order to visit the tomb of my Protector, St. Francis Regis. A Jesuit Father, who resided at a place on the way, and whom I also much wished to consult, advised me strongly to make this pilgrimage. I took with me one of my grandmother's servants, who was very devout to this Saint, having obtained through his intercession the cure of an illness which had threatened his life. It was on the 3rd of May, 1800, the feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross, that we went there. I heard afterwards that it was on that day that the Jesuit Father who had advised me to make this pilgrimage died. So I did not see him nor the holy Archbishop of Vienne, Mgr. d'Aviau, the pious imitator of the Apostle of the Velay, who had concealed himself during this stormy period near that sacred tomb."

Her visit to this holy sanctuary left indelible impressions in Mdlle. Duchesne's mind, but very sad they were for the time being. The body of St. Francis, which had been saved from the fury of the revolutionists, had not yet been brought back. A great crowd, however, had congregated that day around the empty tomb of the mighty worker of miracles, though "everything around it," she says, "was mournful and desolate. No Masses could be said in the Church. Several of the statues of angels round the Saint's image were broken, a thick covering of dust disfigured his altar, another altar was dashed to pieces. Mass was said in a poor barn—the crowd so great that I could not go to Communion, but I was happy enough to do so after it had dispersed." Sensible consolations did not abound in Madame Duchesne's life. She says that she did not find

them during her pilgrimage to Louvesc. But the just man lives by faith, and her faith found what it had sought at that holy shrine—an intercessor and a model. The character of St. Francis' sanctity and the line of his labours were particularly in accordance with the attractions of nature and of grace in her own soul.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, under the reign of Louis XIII., from 1597 to 1640, a religious of the Society of Jesus had accomplished, amidst the mountainous regions of the southern part of France, the work of an apostle with all the zeal and charity of the first preachers of Christianity. No sooner did St. Francis Regis come out of his novitiate which he had made under the auspices of the famous Suarez, than he began to travel about the country, visiting all the small towns and villages, collecting about him the children, teaching in the cottages, nursing the sick and those stricken by the plague, multiplying the corn in the barns of the poor, curing their infirmities, converting heretics, saving sinners from perdition, and drawing after him whole populations who called him "the Saint," and never wearied of listening to his words. Yet his preaching was of the simplest kind, and consisted in explanations of the Catechism and exhortations, in which the words Salvation and Eternity were constantly reiterated. But it was a teaching enforced by the most edifying examples, animated by the most ardent love, and made fruitful by an intimate union with our Lord Jesus Christ. He used to pray day and night, and during his long watches he was often heard ejaculating, "O my God, what do I want on earth or in Heaven but Thee!" As some one truly said, "The love of God was the soul of his soul." Long and severe were his fasts. He lived on bread and water, a little milk and fruit, and slept on three boards or on the bare floor. By frequent disciplines and hair-shirts he crucified his flesh, making himself a voluntary victim for

those he loved more than himself. He often said that God had sent him to evangelize the poor, and gathering them around him he used to exclaim, "Come, my children, you are my treasures and the delight of my heart." Nothing daunted him in his efforts for the salvation of souls—neither fatigue nor wearisome journeys across mountains, forests, and snowy precipices, nor persecution and ill-usage, nor epidemics, not hunger and thirst, nor the stench of the most loathsome ulcers. Martyrdom was the object of his desires. During ten years he implored to be sent amongst the fiercest tribes of Indians in Canada. "What a joy it would be," he said, "if I could die whilst working for the conversion of the Hurons and the Iroquois!" His Superior was obliged to deny him this favour; there were too many applicants for those dangerous missions! To make up for this disappointment, the towns, villages, and scattered populations of the Cevennes, the Vivarais, the Livonage, the Vélay, and the Forez, were moved and transformed by the marvellous power of his apostolical labours. He was only forty-three years of age when, on Christmas Eve, he arrived quite exhausted at the little town of Louvesc, and felt that his last hour was at hand. It was on the 31st of December, 1640, a little before midnight, that the holy missioner saw Heaven dawning on his ravished sight. "Oh, how happy I am!" he exclaimed; "how gladly I die. I see Jesus and Mary coming to meet me." Then, just as he uttered the "*In manus tuas*," &c., his pure soul winged its way to the home of the saints.

Such was the holy protector whom Madame Duchesne invoked—the model on whose virtues she meditated during that pilgrimage. From that time forward a tie existed between them that continued to the end of her life, and increased more and more as she went further from her earthly home and drew nearer to the heavenly abode of her Patron Saint. There is nothing more beautiful in the

history of souls than these holy intimacies between Heaven and earth. It is the Communion of Saints beginning here below, and an anticipation of the blissful union of eternity.

Madame Duchesne tells us that she left Louvesc bent on devoting herself to the education of the poor in imitation of St. Francis Regis. This was the principal result of her pilgrimage: "As soon as I arrived at Grenoble," she says, "where good schools were not wanting for little girls, I took charge of a few little boys, who were totally neglected, and lived like animals in the streets. I found it difficult at first to get hold of even three or four of them, but food and promises of clothing at last induced them to come for one hour a day. These first scholars brought some of their playfellows, and I had thus in my class between fifteen and twenty children, well disposed enough, but so intolerably wild and noisy that all those who lived in the house where I was lodging were angry with me. It was also a trial to be pursued in the streets by the greetings of these disreputable looking creatures. They pointed me out to their parents, who were likewise displeased because I told the boys not to work on Sundays. If it had not been for the thought of St. Francis Regis I should have given up my apostolate. It afforded me, however, many a consolation. Several of these children, who when they first came to me did not even know the names of the Three Divine Persons, learnt the whole of the Catechism, their prayers, and hymns, which they used to repeat to their parents. They all went to Confession, and most of them made their first Communion. I like to think of this work amongst the children, because it tried my patience very much, and that I think we owe to it the house we now possess." The house which she alluded to was her dear monastery of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut. It had been declared the property of the nation, and remained uninhabited, except that the man placed there to take care of it used on Sundays to turn it into a

sort of public-house for the people who made the mountain a promenade. Madame Duchesne gives the following account of the visit she paid to her old home on the Feast of Pentecost, 1801: "I had been to see some ex-Carmelites that day, and had talked to them of hardly anything else but my love for that place. The wish to return to it seemed to grow in my heart during that conversation. I felt as if I already saw the Visitation rising from its ruins, and, moreover, a convent of Carmelites established in what used to be the Chaplain's house."

It was with her young sister and her little niece, Amélie de Mauduit, then aged three years, that Philippine revisited the scenes which reminded her of the happiness of her early religious days. As they stood on the terrace, she was not a little surprised to hear the child say, as she rolled on the thick grass which was growing there in rank abundance, "Oh, yes, I shall come to school here and I shall make my first Communion here." Madame Duchesne, who was always on the watch for the least token of God's will, was struck by these words, and exclaimed, "My God, let the child's words come true." It seemed to her in after times as if the meeting together on such a feast of a novice of the Visitation, Carmelite nuns, and a future scholar of Sainte Marie, had been a prognostic of what was to be one day in that place the spirit, the devotion, and the work of the Sacred Heart.

From that day forward what had been before a vague wish became a resolution to buy Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut, and according to her usual practice, it was with Heaven she began her negotiation. The terms she proposed to her protector, St. Francis Regis, were as follows: (1) "If in a year I am, as I wish, in possession of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut, I will send some one to Louvesc to make a novena of Masses at the tomb of St. Francis Regis and a novena of prayers. (2) I will go to Communion every year on the

day of his feast, and fast on the eve in his honour; if I find it impossible to do so myself I will get some one else to supply for me. (3) I will establish an oratory in honour of this Saint. (4) I will instruct or get twelve poor persons instructed in religion." The next assistance she secured was that of the children whom she was catechizing. "I made them pray to God to enlighten me, for the time of His divine mercy towards me was approaching;" and she adds these words, so full of the spirit of faith: "My business so well begun I felt full of courage, and I began to act."

Her next care was to secure the cooperation of several servants of God. In the first place she consulted M. Brochier, then Vicar-General, who had been a sufferer for the faith; she had probably known him as a prisoner at Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut. Full of the spirit of Jesus Christ, this experienced priest gave an answer which can be summed up in the words, "God's finger is visible in this." Another very virtuous priest, whose name will often recur in this history, M. l'Abbé Rey, made a similar reply. Madame Duchesne tells us that she had also great confidence in a holy priest who was at that time Almoner of the Hospital of Grenoble, and known for his ardent devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As she had in view the reign of that Divine Heart, it was on its most earnest worshippers that she chiefly relied for assistance in her holy plot.

She drew up a petition conjointly with the former Superior of Sainte Marie, the Reverend Mother de Murinais, which was addressed in the name of the surviving nuns to M. du Bouchage, the administrator of the department. Nothing seemed to come of it, and then Madame Duchesne had recourse to her family. The husband of her great friend, Madame de Rollin, having fallen dangerously ill at that time, Philippine nursed him with such affectionate and devoted care that her cousin, full of gratitude, asked

her one day in what manner she could ever repay her extreme kindness. "There is only one thing," Madame Duchesne answered, "which could give me pleasure, and that would be if your husband would use his influence to obtain for us Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut." M. de Rollin was considered a very influential person. The brothers Périer, who were much thought of at that time in Paris, also exerted themselves in behalf of their pious cousin. And thus at last, on the 10th of December, 1801, the house of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut was placed in the possession of Madame Duchesne, who was to pay for it a rent of 800fr. a year and put it into good repair. This was on the last day of a forty days' prayer to the Sacred Heart which Philippine had made for this intention.

Great was her exultation. She tells us that the Prefect seemed to enjoy the sight of her delight, and then relates how she evinced her gratitude to our Lord. "As I left the Prefecture, my first impulse was to go and thank God for His goodness by the side of a poor sick man whom I visited almost every day, and in whose room I had often invoked St. Francis Regis, both for him and for my intention. He seemed to forget his sufferings in the joy which my news gave him. I wished him to be the first to hear it, because I looked upon him as the representative of my good master Jesus Christ."

On the same day Madame Duchesne was visited by a priest whom she was barely acquainted with, but who was to be the instrument of Providence in the work she had in hand. The name of this holy man was Jean Baptiste Rivet. He was well known in Grenoble for his sanctity and the wisdom of his direction. Having heard of Madame Duchesne's success, he came to congratulate her, and to tell her that the Concordat agreed upon between Pope Pius VII. and the First Consul was going to be immediately carried into effect.

The act of reparation which she had accomplished coincided with the legal re-establishment of the Church in France, and it seemed to her as if that visit was sent to her by our Lord in return for the one she had made Him in the person of a poor man.

She determined now, in spite of every opposition, to establish herself and the nuns at once in the old convent. "I was told," she writes, "that it was very rash to go and live in a house almost in ruins, and from which we might be again expelled. I was accused of acting without sufficient advice, and of sacrificing everything to my self-love. How was the convent to subsist? What income would it have? It would not be a vow of poverty, as in former days, but one of beggary. Other people advised us to wait until the following Easter. My answer was that I would not delay an hour my return to the holy home I had so long sighed for; that it was time to show the world what a lie it had propounded when it had dared to call us enslaved victims, and to say that we were glad to return to it." It was thus also that St. Jerome spoke to the enemies of religious life in his days: "Let others think of it what they please. What you call my prison is my home, and my desert is my paradise."

It was on the 14th of December, four days only after it had been made over to her, that Madame Duchesne returned, as she expressed it, to the house of the Lord. "I could not do so the day before," she says, "which I should have liked, as it was the anniversary of St. Chantal's death. The children of my catechism class carried all my things with wonderful alacrity, in spite of the pouring rain. Not the slightest theft was committed. I arrived at Sainte Marie late in the evening, the porter in charge having received all my property. It was blowing and raining, but I was not nearly as wet as my poor children. Their clothes were completely soaked, but in their faces there was a look

of satisfaction which seemed to me a token that our Lord was also pleased."

Such were the first efforts of Madame Duchesne's zeal, and on what a field of battle were those early advantages secured. It was said by one of the noblest victims of our recent frenzy, that in order to be a perfect teacher a man ought to have gone through martyrdom.* The reign of terror, the prison, the scaffold ever in view, had proved a good school for the apostleship, full of struggles and dangers, which God had ordained for Madame Duchesne.

But great as were those first works of hers, they were not wide and vast enough for her heart. The care of prisoners, the saving of children, did not satisfy all her desires. It was not enough to give our Lord children and disciples; Madame Duchesne's object was to restore to Him His spouses, and on the very spot where the hatred of His Sacred Name had so recently imprisoned a crowd of Confessors, she was about to re-open the first sanctuary, where His praises were once more to be heard, and an ardent zeal enkindled to win back for Him more souls than He had lost.

* Father Captier, who was shot at Arcueil on the 25th of May, 1871.

## CHAPTER III.

*Madame Duchesne reinstates the Visitation and the Public Worship of the Church at Sainte Marie. She is unsupported in her efforts for the re-establishment of the Convent, and has recourse to the Sacred Heart.*

It is difficult now to realize the amount of joy and hope with which, at the beginning of this century the announcement of the Concordat was hailed. A new era seemed to open before the Church. Delivered from the spirit and the trammels of the eighteenth century, invigorated in the prisons and on the scaffolds, having, as the Scriptures say, "washed her robes in the Blood of the Lamb," she was starting afresh on a new and glorious course. Her hierarchy was reconstituted, her priests reappearing, her sanctuaries re-opening, her Divine Sacraments about to regenerate innumerable souls in their life-giving floods, and the blood of martyrs to prove, as it always does, the seed of Christianity.

But in the midst of this enthusiasm, there were some who sighed as they looked at the new temple, and loo ed back to the old, who, on comparing them together, noticed many a deficiency, and longed to provide a remedy. They felt that the restoration of Christ's kingdom would never be real as long as the Catholic education of youth was not secured, and that till monastic life flourished again in France the Church would lack her richest jewel. Education on the one hand, religious life on the other, were the basis and the crown of the edifice which they had under-

taken to restore. Madame Duchesne was amongst those who felt this deeply, and it was to that twofold object that this earnest worker applied herself in those early days of the religious restoration in France.

The only persons whom, in the first instance, she took with her to Sainte Marie were Madame Faucherand, a former nun of the Visitation, and a poor girl of twelve, whom she was instructing. She looked upon the adoption of this destitute child as a means of drawing a blessing on the house. Delighted at finding herself at last in the place she had so long sighed for, Madame Duchesne was longing to pour out her heart in thanksgiving to our Lord, and to remain hours alone with Him. "My wish would have been," she wrote, "on that 14th of December to spend the night in our holy sanctuary, where no one had praised God for many a long year, and to employ it entirely in dwelling on His goodness and thanking Him for His mercies. Glad as I was to have a companion, it was rather a disappointment to me to be obliged to sleep in her room, as she was afraid of remaining alone."

It was with the same faith and ardour that the repairs were carried on. Never was princely palace more carefully prepared for a monarch's arrival than the house where the novice of former days was hoping to welcome her Divine Spouse. "It was open to all the winds," she wrote; "but I felt no fears in that solitude, for I knew that God, Who had guided me to it, would also protect us until we could manage to make it secure. I tried hard to do so, spending my time with the workmen, or else in the kitchen, or sweeping every part of the house, which for ten years had been neglected, and often in clearing away the rain and snow. These occupations were all pleasures. I felt the joy that St. Theresa says she experienced when sweeping in her convent. Never had worldly pleasures given me half so much delight. We

prayed in the church, where one door and three windows were missing. It was very cold, but we did not feel it."

Christmas was a great and happy day for the poor monastery. Up to that time the Sisters had worn a secular dress. Prudence had compelled them to do so in a country where during ten years of persecution the religious habit had been forbidden and insulted. Madame Duchesne braved the prohibition, and told her Sisters to make themselves habits of the Order of the Visitation, which they would wear for the first time on Christmas Day, in remembrance of our Lord's appearance in the world, clothed in human flesh. On the eve of the feast, she and her companions walked down to the town, each carrying her little parcel in order to get it blest. One of the workmen, who had formerly been a lay-brother at the Grande Chartreuse, went before them with a lantern in his hand. A priest, who was waiting for them at the church, blest in secret those holy garments, and then said a Midnight Mass. "We looked upon our habits," Madame Duchesne said, "as presents from our Infant Lord." Unto the end of her days she remained faithful to the livery of Christ.

On the 27th, the feast of St. John the Evangelist, she showed it with exultation to two eminent ecclesiastics, Mgr. Spina, Archbishop of Corinth *in partibus*, and Mgr. Castelli, both of whom became Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church. They had come to France for the Concordat, and had been induced by the Abbé Rivet and M. de Rollin to visit Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut, and to take an interest in Madame Duchesne's generous work. They blest this first token of the resurrection of religious life, and it was a great joy to that pious daughter of the Church to appear in the religious garb with her Sisters before these Legates of the Supreme Pontiff. She felt that her efforts were now blest and sanctioned by the sacred authority they represented. Her zeal for the public worship of our

Lord had anticipated the legal formalities for its restoration. She did not venture to open the exterior door of the Church of Sainte Marie, but found means to admit the faithful inside the convent and to have the Divine Mysteries solemnly celebrated. "Our church at Grenoble," she says, "was the first in which the Catholic worship appeared in all its splendour after the Revolution."

On the 29th of January, 1802, the feast of St. Francis of Sales was celebrated in that sanctuary, so full of remembrances of its holy founder. "That was a day," Madame Duchesne writes, "full of the truest consolation. Many excellent priests came to say Mass in our church with that intense joy which holy souls feel in the presence of a new work likely to advance God's glory." It seemed as if our Lord and His saints were taking possession again of their home. But it was easier to repair the old house, and to open part of it to the faithful, than to fill it again with religious inmates. Madame Duchesne's first care had been to recall the former nuns of Sainte Marie to their monastery, constantly pressing them to take up their abode in it. But they did not quite enter into her feelings. Every one of these nuns had, through God's grace, remained faithful to her vows, but ten years of secular life had given them other ideas and other habits. As it so often happens in human affairs, small difficulties stood in the way of Madame Duchesne's great plans. Why, they said, should we hurry so much to take up our abode in a half-ruined house before the entire pacification of the country; before, by the conclusion of the Concordat, convents have been recognized, and their temporalities restored? And who is this novice who wants to set everything to rights? Who has entitled her to take the lead in this matter? Where does she come from? What is her rank or position?"

"Many a bitter moment I went through at that time," was Madame Duchesne's own recollection of those days.

She wrote to Madame de Mauduit: "What I feel most painfully is the opposition of some persons from whom I expected gratitude. Much has been said about me in different ways, but, as I have not acted with a view to worldly glory, I am neither vexed by censure nor elated by praise. My reward is God, and the joy I feel at being again in His house." Alluding to the visit of the Archbishop of Corinth and the generous kindness of some good people, she adds: "I feel more and more confidence when I think of the charity which has been shown me, and which reminds me of the olden days. It is not true to say that it has waxed cold amongst the faithful, for I have seen some of them with tears in their eyes begging me to accept money with as pressing entreaties as people would use to ask for help in some great necessity. May God for their sakes bless our undertaking!"

The nun on whom Madame Duchesne chiefly relied to influence the others was Madame de Murinais, whose advanced age and great virtues made her an object of universal veneration. It took a long time and much patient negotiation to bring about the desired result, and certain conditions were attached to it. The venerable Mother was to take with her to Sainte Marie a young nun, who stipulated that she was to have no other employment but to watch over the health of her Superior, and Madame de Murinais was to be accompanied also by two lay-sisters, one of whom was, like herself, nearly eighty years of age. These recruits did not promise much vigour to the community, but it was not easy to discourage Madame Duchesne.

All being thus arranged, the Superior and her daughters came to Sainte Marie in Passion Week, 1802. "During Holy Week," Madame Duchesne tells us, "a retreat which was very well attended took place in the church." It was given by M. Rivet. The exterior door was still closed, but

on Holy Thursday we ventured to open it, and open it remained ever since. During that retreat it gave me such pleasure to lead into the choir that venerable Mother whom I had so longed to see there. I felt so triumphant." But the triumph was of short duration. A certain number of religious had indeed followed their Superior, but the community thus established, there still remained to secure the observance of the rule. It is a notorious fact that a reform is more difficult than the creation of a new congregation. God Himself with one word called this world into being, but to redeem it He had to shed all His Blood. Madame Duchesne's zeal was doomed to disappointment with regard to the spiritual restoration of Sainte Marie.

We must hasten to say that hundreds of examples might be given of the admirable zeal with which the worthy daughters of St. Francis of Sales hastened to return to their monasteries as soon as the recovery of religious liberty allowed them to do so, and of their resuming the observation of their rule with more fervour than ever. But in the case of Sainte Marie, the elements of which the community was composed were infirm to a degree, which fully accounts for its inefficiency. The Reverend Mother de Murinais, who was then in her eightieth year, was full of good and holy desires, but her age, her health, and her habits, acquired during a long interruption of community life, made her subservient to the will of persons less anxious than herself to resume the yoke of regular discipline. The result of this was a house in which the Superior, in order to keep together her daughters, accepted all sorts of relaxation to the rule, and nuns who did just as they liked. The Divine Office, said in common, and the daily hour of prayer were the only religious exercises enforced. Other practices, such as uniformity of dress, silence, reading aloud in the refectory were entirely set

aside. The governing power of the good Reverend Mother was not strong enough to maintain in the house even the most mitigated observance of the rule. In spite of all the preliminary negotiations, it was evident that there had been a misunderstanding as to the kind of religious life that was to be established at Sainte Marie. Madame Duchesne had contemplated one of strict observance, the others looked upon it simply as a sort of easy retirement.

It was a new and unexpected anguish that Madame Duchesne went through when this became apparent to her. Was her beloved Lord to be so poorly served? Had love for Him waned so cold even in His own sanctuary? After all the outrages of the Revolution were these the compensations, the consolations which that Adorable Heart, so wounded by the crimes of men, had a right to expect? Was it thus the horrors of the past were to be atoned for, that the Church was to be raised from its ruins, and the souls of men and the face of the country sanctified and renewed?

Madame Duchesne relates that on the 2nd of July, feast of the Visitation, the special one of the Order, she knelt down before the Blessed Sacrament, and in the bitterness of her soul, said to our Lord: "O my Lord, must it be that on this very feast of the Visitation I should have to separate myself from the Order which bears its name!" The suffering which this thought gave her was so intense, that it brought on the rupture of a blood vessel. When she saw her handkerchief covered with blood, Madame Duchesne was obliged to leave the chapel. She did so with a breaking heart. "Leaving," she said, "our Lord alone in a house full of His spouses!" No hope mingled with her tears. Her directors did not see more than herself a way out of this sad state of things. One day she told her confessor that she had been weeping bitterly. He shook his head, and said: "You have not yet wept enough,

my child. This is only the beginning of your sorrows; you must arm yourself with courage."

It was God's own merciful purpose to make His daughter go through this hard trial. Her heart was full of the fire of love, but her character was stern, uncompromising, imperious in its desires, and over-eager in pursuit of them. It was well for her to learn in preparation for the future how different realities are from imaginary anticipations, what difficulties necessarily attend all efforts for good in this world, and how many imperfections those who have to deal with men must expect to meet with, even in those high regions where God's grace flows indeed, but through a bed of earth, which too often mixes with and impedes its course.

Before accusing others, Madame Duchesne began by examining herself. Had she been entirely disinterested? Was it her own self-seeking which checked the flow of grace? Was her will free from every tinge of self-love? She asked herself these questions, and was obliged to do justice to the perfect rectitude of her intentions. "I feel," she says, "that after probing my heart I can bear witness to my own conscience that no passion of any kind influenced the steps I took, and that I was ready to submit entirely even to the person who would have made me suffer the most if only she had insisted on the observance of the rules." And she indeed proved this by her personal conduct. Taking upon herself the most laborious offices in the house, she was at once procuratrix, sacristan, portress, and mistress of the youngest children, multiplying her efforts in every direction in order to keep things going. But her example did not avail any more than her entreaties. She then resolved to try a last effort, and kneeling in tears before the Reverend Mother, she besought and implored her for the love of God to take in hand the cause of regular observance.

But this likewise failed, and on the 21st of August, 1802, the feast of St. Jane Frances of Chantal, Madame Duchesne found that the Superior and the Sisters she had brought with her had made up their minds to leave the convent in five days. "During all the time of High Mass that morning," she writes, "I was engrossed with these thoughts, and kept offering to God to go away myself if I was the obstacle to good being done in that house, but it was in vain. The very day on which my Reverend Mother and my Sisters were to take their departure was the anniversary of the dedication of our church, abandoned now by those for whom it had been consecrated." Mother de Murinais sent for me on the eve of the 25th, and said that they were going to leave me the next morning. She was quite composed, and spoke to me kindly. I have thought since that God did not let her feel any regret in order that I might have more freedom of action for a greater work. My tears were almost the only answer I made to that announcement. I said I hoped she might return, but she answered that it was impossible; that she was too old for new undertakings, that they required youth and courage."

The day that Philippine saw her Mother and Sisters in religion descending the hill of Chalmont never to return again to Sainte Marie, she thought that it was all over with her dear convent. Everything seemed at an end, and it would have been difficult to imagine how it could be otherwise, and yet it was at that very moment that everything was about to begin. "No man," says our Lord, "putteth a piece from a new garment upon an old garment," "No man putteth new wine into old bottles." New elements were required for a new work. God had provided them, and on the very day when Sainte Marie, forsaken by the Visitation, remained silent and empty as the grave, the Order of the Sacred Heart was revealed to Madame Duchesne. She was weeping like the holy women of the

Gospel near an empty sepulchre, when she received a visit which seemed to her like the apparition of the angel of the Resurrection. M. Rivet came to see her. We have already seen him conversing with her on the evening that she had purchased the convent of Sainte Marie. He was one of those men ever on the watch for tokens of God's will, and whom Providence sends at decisive and solemn moments in life to make it known to devoted souls. He felt for Madame Duchesne, and spoke to her with pity and kindness. Then he reminded her that on the same day St. Theresa had begun her great work, the Reformation of Mount Carmel, and that the whole town had risen up against her. Then turning from the past, he spoke of the future. Once before he had alluded to the possibility of establishing at Sainte Marie a religious congregation lately founded at Amiens, and which he held in the highest esteem. "From the first moment I heard of the Order," Philippine wrote, "I felt a strong attraction to it, and if it had not been that in the midst of the general falling off I wished to show the world that in spite of all contradictions I loved the yoke of Christ, I should have asked at once to join it." But the hour had not yet come, and M. Rivet's previous disclosures had been mere indications.

This time he spoke more fully. The congregation he had alluded to was founded by one of those valiant missionaries whom she was probably acquainted with, for they were going about in Dauphiné and all the south of France preaching under the name of Fathers of the Faith, following the example and treading in the footsteps of the great apostle St. Francis Regis. The little institute at Amiens had for its object the re-establishment of religion in France by means of the Christian education of girls. This had been one of Philippine's most ancient and constant solicitudes. The Sacred Heart of Jesus was its model and ruling power, that devotion already so dear to the Visita-

tion and to Madame Duchesne. Its rules were founded on those of the Society of Jesus, which had given to the Church St. Francis Xavier and St. Francis Regis, her two favourite saints. The mother-house was in the centre of Christendom at Rome, where the nuns were called *Dilette*, until a higher degree of religious liberty allowed them openly to assume the badge of the Sacred Heart. The humility, piety, and generosity of the Amiens community gave the greatest hope that God was blessing it in a peculiar manner. This conversation greatly comforted Madame Duchesne, her desires with this new light thrown upon them became still more intense, and it was decided that day that M. Rivet should write to Father Roger, one of the Fathers of the Faith, to tell him that Sainte Marie was now unoccupied, and to beg him to ask the Founder of the Amiens congregation to send to Grenoble a little colony of those religious.

Negotiations to this effect were begun, but proceeded rather slowly. Madame Duchesne says herself that this favour had to be obtained by long and patient waiting. The result was most satisfactory. Contrary to all expectations, from that day forward the convent began to recruit new subjects. It really seemed as if Divine Providence was preparing the elements of a work it visibly protected. Those elements were weak as yet, and the vocations of a humble sort; but some very holy souls were concealed under obscure names. After All Saints' Day M. Rivet's sister entered the convent in which she had just made a retreat. She was a person of great merit and goodness, who had been a devoted mother, and quite capable of laying the foundations of a new Institute. At Christmas Mdlle. Balastron, esteemed for her piety, joined the little Society; and Emilie Giraud, a young, pious, and innocent school-girl, announced her intention of becoming a nun. The influence of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was beginning

to attract souls to that holy mountain, and a plan of religious life was organized. Madame Duchesne, afraid of being made Superior, and thinking it prudent to keep aloof, procured Madame Rivet's appointment to that office and title. The little Association adopted for the time being the name of "Daughters of the Propagation of the Faith," which seemed a prophetic indication of Madame Duchesne's future career. M. Brochier gave the community a provisional rule, and on the 3rd of March, 1803, received their simple vows of chastity and obedience. "I had the great consolation," Madame Duchesne said, "to see our house assume a religious character and the practices of community life. That same year the number of our pupils increased to eighteen. We were very much pleased with this result, small as it was, but still we longed for an establishment which would afford us more scope to work for Jesus Christ."

The negotiations going on at Belley between M. Rivet and Father Roger had not yet ended in anything, and Madame Duchesne was sighing over these delays when the very man who was to remove all difficulties, and to make the light of God shine upon her, arrived at Grenoble.

Father Joseph Varin was well known in that country, where there was scarcely a town or a village which he had not evangelized, not a corner into which he had omitted to carry the light of the Gospel still more by the influence of his saintly life and burning zeal than by the eloquence of his words: Once a soldier and now a religious, he had all the courage and decision of a military man, all the spirit of prayer and abandonment to the action of God of a monk. It was on those two virtues, courage and confidence, that he had founded the humble Society of teaching nuns at Amiens. The small number of these Sisters had made him long hesitate to accept the foundation of Grenoble; but when once he had seen Madame Duchesne this reluctance vanished.

She gives the following account of Father Varin's first visit to Sainte Marie: "He arrived on the 31st of July (St. Ignatius' Day), 1804, with Father Roger. After Mass they went over the house. I followed them, but could not detect the least indication of their thoughts and intentions. During Benediction that evening Father Varin's heart was moved by the Holy Ghost to decide entirely in our favour, but he said nothing. The next day he was going away. Madame Rivet and I went to see the two Fathers after Mass. Father Varin spoke only of holy indifference, and of the slow way in which God's works proceed. I answered that, on the contrary, the Scriptures speak of him as of a giant running his course, and added that if St. Francis Xavier had acted so deliberately he would not have done such great things and converted so many countries. The good Father laughed at my eagerness, and said that there must be indeed no further delays, and that he was going to send us, as soon as possible, Madame Barat to found our house. This consoling promise seemed to lift a mountain's weight off my heart, and that day was one of real happiness."

Little as he had said, Father Varin had felt at once the greatest admiration and sympathy for Madame Duchesne, and discerned the greatness of her soul. This is evident in all his letters at that time, and when he went to Amiens to arrange the departure of the future colony, he thus expressed the hopes he founded on her: "You will find there companions who will be a help to you, one especially; if there were only that one, she would be worth seeking at the other end of the world."

From that moment she began to prepare everything. Through the influence of her cousins, the Messieurs Périer, and the good offices of M. Gerando, Secretary of the Minister of the Interior, she obtained the legal recognition of her house as a school; at the same time she kept writing

the most pressing letters to Father Varin, who answered her thus: "Your and your companions' perseverance in the projects that we agreed upon is a token that God will bless it. I did not deceive you when I said that your Sisters would be as dear to me as mine. Let us belong not to ourselves, but to Jesus Christ." This was indeed the case with Madame Duchesne, who did not think it enough to interest earthly powers in the advancement of her work, but was continually besieging Heaven with prayers. She had recourse to the Mother of Mercy, and with Madame Rivet began a novena of fasts, communions, and prayers in honour of Mary. At the same time she and her Sisters wrote to Madame Barat, their future Superior.

Philippine knew her as yet only by name. She was twenty-five years of age, just ten years younger than Madame Duchesne, and had been for three years at the head of the house at Amiens. The authority she thus early exercised was derived neither from age, birth, station, nor even from the excellent education she had received; it was owing to her humble, gentle, and charitable sanctity, which made others love and respect her as the faithful representative of God's authority. The following answer to the letters Madame Duchesne and Madame Rivet had written to the humble Superior gave them some idea of her peculiar gifts: "I have received your letter, which has filled me with joy by the knowledge it gives me of souls so well disposed, and therefore so well fitted to fulfil the purposes of God's Providence. The only thing I can regret is that God should have vouchsafed to choose me to direct them. . . . But when the soil of a garden is good there is less need of skill and care on the part of the gardener. This consoles me, and I feel confident that God will bless us. You are fortunate indeed to be called to so sublime a vocation as that of loving God and leading others to do so, and still more blest in the resolution to omit nothing that can

make you worthy of it." Father Varin added his exhortations: "Let us hope everything," he wrote, "from the goodness of our Lord, and be sure that the more we hope the more we shall obtain. Let us enlarge our hearts in order that our Lord may enlarge His mercies." And in another letter: "Yes, I may well say that your soul and the souls of your companions are dear to me, for I have seen that nothing will interfere with their giving themselves to God. I can well enter into your desire not to be bound to this world not even by a single thread. Strengthen more and more this desire in your hearts."

This sort of generosity was the very spirit of the Institute into which Madame Duchesne was now about to enter.

It was on the 13th of December, 1804, that Madame Barat, accompanied by three other nuns, arrived at Sainte Marie to take possession of it in the name of the Sacred Heart. A new spiritual existence then began for Madame Duchesne. Hitherto she had walked blindfolded, as it were, along doubtful and obscure paths, seeking an end which seemed to recede as she advanced. She did not know where God was leading her; nevertheless, He did lead her onward, and there had not been a single step in her life, whether we look at her education, her novitiate, her apostolate, or the persecutions and contradictions she had undergone, which had not been means of approach to the Sacred Heart. Now at last daylight dawned, and the road before her was free and open. From that time forward she had only to walk submissively in the way of obedience, following the light thrown upon it by the lamp carried by another hand.

She understood this, she felt it, and gave thanks to our Lord. All this first part of her own and of her dear monastery's history, written by herself, is summed up and ended by the words—"I will sing for ever the praises of the Lord." *Domine, memorabor justitiæ tuæ solius.*

## CHAPTER IV.

*Madame Duchesne's training in the spirit of the Sacred Heart. Her novitiate under the direction of Mother Barat. The Convent School of Sainte Marie. Euphrosine Jouve. Madame Duchesne is professed.*

THE union of Sainte Marie with the Sacred Heart had given a strong impulse to Madame Duchesne's hopes. Full of apostolical zeal, and only occupied with the interests of the Church, it seemed to her even at that time that an extraordinary diffusion of the faith, not only in that house, but beyond it and afar, would proceed from that sanctuary, and in her gratitude anticipating the graces she looked forward to, Philippine wrote, "May Providence be a thousand times blest for having assigned to me the task of preparing the abode of those who will come here to receive the Word of God, and to carry its fruits to distant lands." To this prophetic aspiration the servant of God added the following words, "Still greater will be my happiness if, all unworthy as I am of entering that holy Society, I am through pure mercy admitted into it, and can thus strive to rescue souls from our common enemy to give them to our great Master."

When Madame Barat arrived at Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut accompanied by Father Roger, Madame Duchesne came down the steps to meet her, and knelt down before her new Superior. According to the ancient practice she kissed her feet, and saluted her in the words of the prophet Isaias, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him

that bringeth good tidings and that preacheth peace." This text is generally sung during the ceremony of the kissing of the feet when missionaries are departing for distant countries.

It was not long before Madame Duchesne gave all her confidence to her young and gentle Superior. Joy and hope resulted from this intimacy, and she felt that a new era had begun for her dear monastery. She wrote in her journals, "A better state of things began for us after Madame Barat's arrival. We felt that we could yield ourselves completely to her guidance, and to the true happiness of living under her rule was added the joy of seeing the long wished for work in progress, which we hope will subsist to the greater glory of God."

We need not relate in this history the circumstances which attended Madame Barat's arrival, and marked her presence at Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut. All that concerns us is the spiritual influence which she exerted over Madame Duchesne. It was under her directing hand that this chosen soul advanced in the heavenward way, and we have now to study the nature of her training in the Order she had joined, that of the Sacred Heart.

It was the first time that Madame Barat had made a foundation. She was, as we have already said, only twenty-five years of age, and had been Superior four years. How had she been prepared for the awful responsibility of governing the souls of others? How did she exercise that government, and what was there about that young Reverend Mother which immediately won Madame Duchesne's confidence and veneration? Certainly no merely natural gifts. Madame Barat's power of influence was altogether interior and unassuming. There was nothing commanding in her appearance. She was humble and even timid. Her whole object was to be hidden with God, and the secret of her ascendency consisted in her close union with Him. The

Divine Heart, Whose dominion upon earth she was bent on forwarding, reigned absolutely in her own heart. In the words of the Apostle she was clothed with Jesus Christ, and this made her a being whose holiness exercised that sort of power over others which enabled St. Paul to say, "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ." Such a Superior, however weak in a human sense, could speak of God and govern in His name, for it was in Him she lived.

Madame Barat was in the habit of drawing lessons from the mysteries of the Church, and as Christmas was then at hand she began by exciting in the hearts of her new daughters a great devotion for the Infant Jesus, and led them to found their perfection on a close imitation of the virtues of the Divine Child. We read in the journal of Sainte Marie, "Madame Barat, wishing to inspire us with a generous spirit of self-sacrifice, used to point out that in that Sacred Model, even in infancy, the Victim is to be found, and that the manger is made of the same wood as the Cross. At each recreation a crib was placed in the midst of us, so that we might learn to look upon it as she did herself with a peculiar affection. We were to offer to our Infant God sacrifices sometimes of a mere devotion of sentiment, sometimes of an attachment or too tender friendship, or of something agreeable and convenient. It was through the hands of our Superior that Jesus received from us these our early sacrifices. We made them in her presence in order to secure for them by that means a favourable acceptance at the hands of the great model of obedience and religious submission."

These first lessons were only preliminaries of a novitiate which was to train the nuns of Sainte Marie in the spirit of their new Institute. This probation was to last a year, and it was for this object that Madame Barat came and remained all that time at Grenoble.

The novitiate was opened on the 31st of December, 1804.

"That last day of the year," Madame Duchesne says, "was the first of our new birth to the life we had chosen." After the rule had been established and observed for some weeks, and the way prepared for coming graces, a retreat was preached on the 11th of February and the succeeding days by Father Roger. Above the high altar of the church of Sainte Marie there was at that time a small chapel, the painted walls of which still exist. It was there that the preacher gave the nuns instructions several times a day. Father Roger was, after Father Varin, one of the most distinguished Fathers of the Society. He had been his companion during the emigration, had shared his labours in the Paris hospitals, and with him presided over the formation of the Society of the Sacred Heart. For three years he had been employed in evangelizing Lyons and its neighbourhood, and especially devoted himself to the Christian training of youth. He was a zealous apostle, full of the Spirit of God. His teaching was austere, and his words touched hearts to the quick. Each successive instruction on this occasion brought about some change in the habits of those he was addressing.

It was indeed well and desirable to preserve in the new community the interior spirit of the Visitation, but not certain conventual practices, which were not suitable to the object the Sacred Heart had in view. The grating, for instance, was suppressed, and what was perhaps a greater sacrifice, one only director accepted by all the community. M. Rivet was appointed to this post, and filled it for twenty years, so that he may be considered as the real Father of the house of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut.

Madame Duchesne gave herself up heart and soul to the abnegation inculcated, and feeling that she would ever be in God's debt, it seemed to her that to give short of everything would be to give nothing. When at the end of the retreat, Father Roger asked her to surrender to our

Lord whatever she most cared for, her ready answer was, "Then, Father, this house is the only thing I can give, for except Sainte Marie I do not find that I hold to anything in the world."

These changes once accomplished Sainte Marie assumed a new form, that of the Sacred Heart, but it was all done in a simple noiseless manner, the constraining power being simply the love of God.

There were eight religious in the house, including Madame Barat and the other nuns from Amiens. Two widow ladies and an Ursuline who followed the rule of the community without belonging to it, twenty pupils and five serving girls completed the establishment. Such were the somewhat anomalous elements which had to be harmonized and animated with a new life. Young Sister Emilie Giraud was learning to teach the smallest of the pupils, Madame Duchesne the older girls. Sister Adelaide Second, a newcomer, was at the head of the poor school, but was soon replaced by Madame Geneviève Deshayes, from Amiens. They all worked very hard, from the moment of rising at five o'clock to bed-time, which was at a quarter to ten, and had only one half-hour for recreation. Madame Duchesne was especially indefatigable. Entirely overlooking the fact that her age and the possession of the house gave her a peculiar position, she chose to submit as a child to her young Superior. On her side Madame Barat at once discerned all the greatness and generosity of that chosen soul, and between them arose one of those admirable friendships which the love of God alone can create.

Prayer was the first link of this holy intimacy. As adoration of and union with Christ were the principal and essential end of the Institute, the daughter of St. Francis of Sales found in the Sacred Heart both example and encouragement for her ardent love of the Tabernacle. She

liked to see her holy Superior kneeling in the choir at the same place where tradition said that Madame de Chantal had been wont to pray. She liked to be near her in order to join in her prayers, but used humbly to say, "I feel that our Lord must be so pleased to be with Mother Barat that He cannot care to attend to me."

To a continual spirit of prayer Madame Duchesne added the severest practices of mortification, for instance, mixing wormwood or other bitter herbs with her food in remembrance of the vinegar and gall Jesus had to drink. Madame Barat often intended to prevent this, but such was her absorption in God that at meals she was often quite unconscious of what was going on about her, and, though her novice was sitting at her side, did not see what she was doing, to the latter's great satisfaction.

But what Madame Barat recommended to her novice more than exterior and bodily austerities, what she taught her to consider as the essence of the Christian and religious life at the Sacred Heart, was the interior mortification of the passions, a calm and gentle spirit amidst all the trials inseparable from the work of a foundation. Contradictions of all sorts were rife at that moment. Every kind of false report was circulated against the convent, the religious, and their rule. Madame Duchesne felt this keenly, and writes, "They could not keep silence about our house; jealousy, spite, and impiety ventured to attack the virtue of courageous women who had left peaceful and happy homes, and exposed themselves to all the risks of a new establishment, because they foresaw that it would contribute to the glory of God. People were not ashamed of calling their faith in question, and of speaking of them as of penitents who had led a bad life. Lives hidden in God were deemed mysterious and suspicious. Others criticized the firmness with which useless entrances were prevented and postulants rejected if not young enough to conform to the rule, they

also cavilled at the omission of some of the observances of the ancient monasteries which were not in keeping with the critical period in which we lived. The ability of the teachers was denied, their youth, especially that of the Superior, was turned into ridicule, just as if there were limits of age to God's gifts, and that the work of His Spirit depended upon our wretched humanity."

It astonished Madame Duchesne to see her young Superior smiling quietly and charitably when she heard of all these attacks and scoffs. This singular gentleness subdued and captivated her. She wrote about it as follows: "When I saw her acting always under the sole guidance of God and that I compared the sweetness of her words with the bitterness of the attacks made upon her, it was easy to discern that she had a passionate love of virtue, and sought nothing but God in all she did, and clinging to her I made light of troubles which can indeed for a moment impede His work but can never destroy it." This was indeed the great lesson of the Heart of Jesus: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart;" and it was Mother Barat's example which in so attractive a manner exemplified its teaching.

Her words confirmed what her example had done. A journey to Lyons, which kept her away from Grenoble during the spring of 1805, brought about a correspondence between her and Madame Duchesne, which shows us the process of that spiritual training in which a tender charity and a true Christian friendship were united to all the energy of an ardent love of God.

Madame Barat dwells in her letters on the faithful adoration of Jesus in the Tabernacle, but subordinates even this devotion to religious obedience, placing love itself under the yoke of duty. Madame Duchesne had written to her at the beginning of Lent that she had enjoyed on the preceding Sunday the happiness of spending three

hours before the Blessed Sacrament. She answers: "I do not blame you, my dear daughter, for seeking this consolation, always provided that you felt ready to give it up if your tiresome Mother had desired you to go to bed. If I had not been absent, I was also to have spent those three hours with you at the feet of our Blessed Lord. I hope to have that consolation on Holy Thursday, if I return in time."

In another letter she speaks to her daughter and friend of the concerns of her soul and the interior life which animates the Institute she is preparing to embrace. Probably she saw that Madame Duchesne's activity exposed her to the danger of being too much absorbed in Martha's exterior occupations, and she speaks to her of the calm and silent life of Mary: "I long to hear from you, my dear daughter, and to have more details concerning you, especially as to what you know most interests me—the progress of your soul: speak to me more of that than of the business of the house, though I care about it also." And again: "Go on, my dear daughter, watching over yourself, and grow every moment in the love of Jesus Christ. Let this love consume everything that is not for Him. Your Divine Spouse asks for your heart without reserve or limitation. He continually addresses to you the words of the Canticle: '*Surge amica mea et veni.*'" Then follow many Latin quotations from the Holy Scriptures on the necessity of pruning the vine, of seeking the bridegroom in the desert and in the hole of the rock, of hunting the small foxes out of the vineyard, which means to hunt out subtle and dangerous faults. "You understand, my dear daughter, that what I ask of you is a continual and entire renouncement of self. For you 'the hole of the rock' means a spirit of humility, gentleness, and prayer; but begin by expelling the foxes, and do that work with peace and confidence. Our Lord, Who has given us to

each other, has appointed no time nor limits for us but those of eternity."

These two souls were indeed, and were resolved to continue, indissolubly united, but in the arms of Jesus crucified. Sacrifice was always the beginning and the end of Mother Barat's directions. In the first days of Holy Week she gave her novice leave to spend the whole night of Maundy Thursday before the Blessed Sacrament, and writing to her at the same time on the Crucifixion, she takes the opportunity of predicting to her daughter that God has heavy crosses in store for her, and that it is only by accepting, embracing, and loving the Cross that she will become, like Xavier, a "conqueror of souls." "If I had been able," she says, "to be with you during this visit to our Divine Lord, I should have made you renew all your promises at His Feet; but above all, that of embracing His Cross. I would have told you, my dear daughter, all those which await you and which our Lord will send as soon as you have made this generous act, for you know that the greatest of His treasures is the Cross, and you will have a great share in it. But be courageous, and without asking for sufferings be willing readily to accept them. Some of these crosses will proceed from your own self, but others, equally painful, from other sources. You will tell me that these are sad prophecies. Yes; sad for the natural heart, but precious in the order of grace. During that happy night let the love of Jesus penetrate into your soul. Oh! if you could but deserve to feel one spark of it, crosses would seem to you light indeed. Like St. Francis Xavier, you would exclaim, 'Still more, Lord, still more.' But I ask you only to abandon yourself into His hands and say, '*Paratum cor meum Deus—paratum cor meum.*' Pray for me that night; my heart will be near you, and I shall often visit you in spirit."

A prophetic spirit seems to have dictated these words,

for the following year, on that same night from Holy Thursday to Good Friday, a still more visible light was thrown on Madame Duchesne's future path. Holy Week, the Passion, the Last Supper, Calvary, are the remembrances and previsions that mingle with the past and future bearings of that remarkable life.

Madame Barat returned to Sainte Marie on the morrow of Low Sunday, bringing with her a new postulant, Mdlle. Henriette Girard, whom she thus speaks of: "I hope you will be pleased with your new companion. You will not be sorry to find that she is rather old: there ought to be, at any rate, a few persons of experience amongst us." This new postulant was the twelfth member of the community.

Several servants of God came to second the Superior in the instruction of her novices. The jubilee was at that time preached at Grenoble with the best results by Fathers Lambert and Gloriot, belonging to the Congregation of the Fathers of the Faith. "These preachers," Madame Duchesne says, "are worthy of the admiration of all Europe. They have changed the face of a criminal city, and touched the hearts of men who for thirty and even fifty years had been deaf to the Word of God. And it is these men who vouchsafed to favour our poor little hill of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut with their eloquent and solid teachings!"

Their instructions were in complete accordance with those of Madame Barat. The spirit of the Sacred Heart pervaded them throughout. And on the feast of that Divine Heart they explained to their devout hearers the full scope and excellence of this Devotion. Joy, strength, and ardour in the spiritual strife formed another subject of their exhortations. We read in the journal that on the feast of St. Ignatius, Father Lambert spoke after Mass of the pleasure it gave him to see in the new community so pure and great a joy that it was visible at first sight. He exhorted his auditors to despise the judgments of the world,

pointed out to them the advantages of the life they had embraced, congratulated them on being of the number of those the world deems foolish, and described the nature of that divine folly, the folly of the Cross, so pleasing to our Lord, so abhorred by worldly men.

More deeply still did Father Barat, the brother of the foundress of the Sacred Heart, enter into the very essence of the Institute, conformity with our Lord. "He showed us," the same journal relates, "the true lover of Jesus so full of the desire of imitating her great Model, that she cannot exist without feeling in her heart that keen sword which transpierces Christian souls, or being touched by that holy sorrow, the offspring of ardent love, which can enjoy nothing on earth because it finds in creatures obstacles to a union with her Beloved." His conferences on apostolic zeal took a still stronger hold on Madame Duchesne's soul. "He told us," she says, "that the devil is more eager, more persevering in seeking the destruction of souls than we are in saving them, and showed us the effects of Christian might in so many saints who conquered souls by dint of making themselves victims ever ready for immolation." She adds that, still more astonished at the wonderful virtue of this Father than at his deep learning, she felt at first a little afraid of approaching him. "But charity," she goes on to say, "is condescending, and we were soon only too anxious to turn to account the five days he stayed with us."

This devoted zeal exercised a great influence over Madame Duchesne's congenial soul. The dream of both these servants of God was the conversion of heathen countries. Father Barat seconded in every way her efforts in that direction, and only regretted not being able to tread the same path himself.

In the meantime, under Madame Duchesne's direction, guided by Mother Barat, the convent school was also in-

vigorated with the life and spirit of the Sacred Heart. In those days there was a great work to be done with regard to children of various grades who had been born and brought up in the midst of the Revolution. The domestic principles of so many families had been grievously shaken. Sin and ignorance had made sad havoc amongst souls during that terrible time, when the temples of God had been laid waste and destroyed. A new heart had to be formed in that rising generation, and on what heart could it be so worthily modelled as on the Sacred Heart of Jesus? Madame Duchesne made it, as it were, the centre of her work of education. She was herself a great and efficient teacher. She loved what was divine and immortal in children, and knew how to interest them in learning, but especially by her devoted care and affection she managed to attract even those who would have been inclined to take alarm at the rigidity of her faith. Life was both happy and good at Sainte Marie, and duties were sweetened by the bright rays of Divine love. One of the pupils of that period declared in after-life "that peace and joy reigned in the school, and that it became a little earthly paradise."

On one occasion, to Madame Duchesne's great delight, the venerable Curé of the Cathedral, M. l'Abbé Lagrée, presided at the distribution of prizes in that same convent where he had been imprisoned during the Reign of Terror. On that day, the 23rd of September, he gave the children their crowns at the foot of the altar in order to make them feel that they owed their rewards to God; and a venerable priest, M. Roger, Director of the great Seminary at Lyons, took the opportunity of impressing upon them that they were to strive for a still higher recompense—the glory of Heaven and the crown of immortality.

It was not only from Grenoble and every part of Dauphiné and the adjoining French provinces that pupils

were sent to Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut. Many of them came from Savoy and Italy, for houses of education were scarce in those days. Among these young strangers were Mdlle. Nina Costa, who became afterwards Princess Centurioni, and Mdlle. Lisa de Voltera, a descendant of the Viscontis, who owed her recovery from a dangerous illness to Madame Duchesne's devoted care. Some of her own nieces were also in the school, and great were the hopes she secretly founded on these children. Little Amélié de Mauduit, who had predicted in her infancy that she would make her first Communion in that convent, edified her companions by her youthful piety. But the most remarkable was Euphrosyne Jouve, a beautiful child, who at the age of seven and a half showed such extraordinary ability and intelligence that her aunt took special pleasure in her education, often wondering whether she was meant for the world or for the cloister, for a life of work on earth or an early departure for Heaven. The training of the Sacred Heart, such as it existed at Sainte Marie, was never better exemplified than in this child, whose destiny was closely connected with that of her aunt. We find her described as follows: "Her hair was fair and curling, her eyes large and blue, her complexion brilliant. The animation and charming expression of her countenance corresponded with the dispositions of her soul. At the age of six she was so fond of reading that it was necessary to restrict her to one volume a day. With the same eagerness she shared in all her brother's pursuits and games, and thus acquired habits of activity and undaunted courage." Madame Duchesne, writing to her sister who lived at Lyons, says: "Your daughter is one of our enjoyments here, and my delight in the midst of my most serious occupations." And again: "In the Catechism class she speaks as much as I do, corrects the mistakes of the other children, and forestalls their answers. She explains her meaning in the

best words possible, and like a grown up and well educated person. In your absence, dearest sister, I feel as if I saw an image of you in your child, and she is therefore doubly dear to me."

But Euphrosyne had also the characteristic qualities of her family, and her aunt had much trouble to subdue her self-will, which made her impatient of all control. Every evening she made her kneel down by her side and give an account of the faults of the day. Her greatest fear was that this gifted child should indulge in vanity and self-complacency. She took care never to flatter her, and tried to prevent others from paying her compliments. She tells her sister that she had been agreeably surprised by her husband's visit; that her daughters had been almost wild with joy at seeing their father, and that she was happy to say that he had refrained from praising Euphrosyne too much, who was quite sufficiently aware of her own merits.

What she wished was to substitute in that generous soul for a narrow self-love, a deep and wide love of God. She taught her to love the Divine Spouse of virgins. The greatest reward that could be held out to little Euphrosyne was permission to recite Office with the nuns, or on holidays to dress like them. She taught her to love God in the person of the poor; and another favour which she had to obtain by good conduct was that of being allowed to carry to the prisoners of the *Basses-Fosses* the soup which was made for them at the convent.

Thus stimulated, the little girl studied with so much zeal that Madame Duchesne began to teach her Latin. Madame Barat treated her also as her own child, often keeping her in her room and taking particular pains with her; for she saw in the child a likeness to her aunt which seemed to indicate that the young sapling would hereafter bear the same fruits as the full-grown tree.

Joy and gladness of heart are essential elements of the

spirit of the Sacred Heart. When Father Varin came in August to visit the convent he was pleased to find in all the nuns a cheerful generosity in God's service. It was a token that the reign of Jesus Christ was established in the novitiate, and that the souls trained in it were sufficiently matured to be professed, as fruit is fit for gathering when ripened by the rays of the summer sunshine.

On the 11th of November, 1805, Father Varin, accompanied by Father Roger, went to Grenoble to prepare his daughters for their vows. The exercises of the retreat began on the 13th, feast of St. Stanislaus, and ended on the 21st, festival of the Blessed Virgin's Presentation. On that day Madame Duchesne and her Sisters were professed by M. Rey, Vicar-General and their ecclesiastical Superior. He was assisted by M. Rivet and M. Rombaud, as well as by the two Fathers of the Faith who had given them the Spiritual Exercises. Father Varin preached on the text, "This day will be famous among you." "We all," Madame Duchesne states in her journal, "made our vows kneeling before the altar on which the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, and in the hands of our Mother, who was standing on the right side of the altar."

On the following Sunday Father Varin dwelt on the subject of gratitude, taking for his theme the words which Tobias spoke of his guardian angel: "My father, what shall we render to him for all the good he has done us?" All those who were listening to him applied them to Madame Barat, who had been for a year the guardian angel of the novitiate. In the evening he again addressed the Sisters before Benediction, and prepared them for an approaching sacrifice which he did not yet specify. Afterwards he announced that the Mother General would soon leave them, the interests of the Society requiring her return to Amiens.

Accordingly she left Grenoble on the following Friday,

naming her former companion, Madame Geneviève Deshayes, Superior at Sainte Marie. The union was now effected, the house founded, the wills of the Sisters in complete harmony with the rules they had embraced, their souls transformed by the spirit of the Sacred Heart, and the reign of Jesus Christ established in their hearts. Madame Duchesne, prepared for this Divine alliance by her fervent novitiate, had taken our Lord for her Spouse, and on that day, like her patron Saint, St. Rose, had sealed a compact with His Heart which nothing could now dissolve. *Rosa cordis mei, tu mihi sponsa esto.* "Rose of my heart, thou art henceforward my spouse for all eternity."

## CHAPTER V.

*Madame Duchesne's Special Vocation and ardent desires for the Foreign Missions. Reverend Mother Barat's long and careful training of the future missionary.*

1806—1812.

Madame Barat's departure did not interrupt the course of her instructions to Madame Duchesne. They were continued in letters, which evince the goodness, the wisdom, and the sanctity of the Foundress. At first they only formed a sequel to her teachings on the religious life during her residence at Sainte Marie. But circumstances, which seemed to throw a new and heavenly light on Madame Duchesne's future career, gave a different impulse to this correspondence, and assigned to Madame Barat's direction a special and personal object.

On the 6th of January, 1806, the feast of the Epiphany, one of the most remarkable religious men of that day visited Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut. Dom Augustin de Lestrange, Abbot of la Trappe, was a perfect type of an apostle and a hero. Driven out of his monastery by a decree of the National Assembly, he had carried away with him to Switzerland the greatest number of his monks, and founded in the Canton of Fribourg the Convent of La Trappe de Val-Sainte. There he gathered together a chosen band, composed of those who in that revolutionary period had felt themselves especially called to a religious life. Spain, England, Belgium, and Piedmont soon received offshoots from that humble monastery, which a Bull of Pius VI.

constituted into an abbey, and the central house of the Order. The French invasion of Switzerland again overtook Dom Augustin and his monks. They went successively to Russia, to Germany, to Poland, to Denmark, and returned in 1802 to Val-Sainte, protected at that moment by the Emperor, who soon afterwards became their most violent persecutor. The Abbé de Lestrange had lately returned from America, where he had established two houses for the education of youth. The whole of the Catholic world was in admiration of that holy man to whom Pius VII. had said: "Go on, my son; you are treading a glorious path, and the aid and favour of the Apostolic See will never fail you."

The saintly abbot spoke to the nuns of Sainte Marie of the American missions he had just visited, and dilated on the misery of nations deprived of the light of faith. He had travelled through the valleys of the Missouri and Mississippi, and found in consequence of the unhappy circumstances of the time the whole of those regions in a state of spiritual barrenness and desolation. Immense and beautiful tracts of country without God and without Christ, holy graves desecrated, and churches in ruins, here and there a solitary missioner lost in the savannahs. At the same time a craving for a new apostolate, traces of religion still to be found in the huts of the Indians, a desire for the return of priests of the Catholic prayer, as they used to call them; priests and religious preparing to tread in the footsteps of the ancient missionaries, a new church springing up with the sanction of the Holy See, which promised to be both free and efficient in the midst of an infant nation; in short, great needs and great hopes, the darkness of night giving way to the dawn of a new day. Such was the picture which Dom Augustin placed before the eyes of Madame Duchesne and her companions at Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut.

The words of such a man carry with them a strong power of grace. Those uttered on that day had extraordinary results. Up to this time we have seen Madame Duchesne drawn alternately, or sometimes simultaneously to the contemplative life and to the apostolate of teaching and work amongst the poor, and unable to discern which of these lives was eventually to predominate in her future course. The words of the Abbot Lestrange were the means by God's grace of turning the whole direction of her thoughts and of her life towards the foreign missions. On that feast of the Epiphany a guiding star shone with no uncertain light on her vocation.

Four days after this visit, and still burning with the zeal it had kindled in her heart, she made known her resolution to Mother Barat. She alludes to this later in the following manner: "On the 10th of January, whilst I was making my meditation in the children's dormitory on the Detachment of the Three Kings, I felt a wish to imitate them, and my too strong attachment for this house of Sainte Marie, which has cost me so many tears, vanishing, I determined to offer myself for the instruction of the Chinese or other heathens. On the 23rd of the month I wrote to you, my dear Mother, to tell you of that intention."

This last-mentioned letter has not been preserved, but we have Madame Barat's answer. It is an outburst of intense gratitude to our Lord. "Your letter," she wrote, "has touched me to the quick, I felt my prayers had been heard. Yes, my dear daughter, it was this that I was asking our Lord for you ever since He had placed you under my care, and if I kept so often earnestly urging you on, it was from the conviction that our Lord expected at your hands this self-devotion, this complete sacrifice. I was influenced by another motive, which I can now reveal, but to you only; it is one of my secrets."

She then told her of the wish, even the hope she

had long cherished of assisting in spreading the Gospel in distant lands. It had been a great effort of resignation on her part to obey the commands which kept her in France, but she had not on that account given up the idea of being instrumental in the salvation of the heathen." "No, that wish increases every day I live," she writes. "I ask of God that at any rate one of my companions may fulfil it, and that she may be disposed and guided by the Holy Spirit. If we cannot go so far at present, may some of those who will succeed us achieve it, and in the meantime let many amongst us entertain this desire; let them pray for those nations, and be full of zeal for their conversion, and kindle in the hearts of others this apostolic flame, so as to be ready to seize on any opportunity which God in His wisdom and mercy may afford us."

But when was that time likely to arrive, and when it did arrive what share in it was Madame Duchesne to have? The Superior's answer to these pressing inquiries was as follows: "And now, my dear daughter, I think I see you kneeling before your unworthy Mother, and asking her if it is you she intends to send, or rather, if it is you whom our Lord Himself calls to this undertaking . . . You are expecting that assent which you have already sought, and which seems to your ardent desires so long delayed. But suffer me to put it off a little still. What I feel inclined to say is, Hope for it. Cherish your hopes on that subject, and strive to become less unworthy of so great a grace. Pray also, as I shall do, for it. How happy it would make me if our Lord, Who has so much cause to reject my services, accepted yours. Then it would be my turn to kneel at your feet, and to beg you to receive me as your little servant."

When Madame Duchesne read this letter she saw clearly that her prayers were granted. It seemed as if she was approaching the object of all her desires. "Then I may

indulge," she writes, "in this sweetest of hopes. It will be one day realized. And even now by sighs and tears I may tend towards those countries where I shall at last serve our Lord, and possess nothing but Him. The fear of being unworthy of so high a destiny will be a powerful stimulus to try and improve. 'I send you amongst wolves!' With what respect and emotion I shall hear these words from my dear Mother's lips. Would that she could truly say 'as a lamb amongst wolves.' With what joy I shall take her hand, and placing it on my head, hear her utter that blessing, *Ab illo benedicaris in cujus honore cremaberis.** I often picture to myself the decisive moment, and oftener still I visit in thought the places to which you will let me go. . . . How I long to know what you will say to me; I kneel in spirit to hear it."

To burn with zeal for God and for souls, like incense before the altar, was the sense Madame Duchesne attached to the blessing she asked from her Reverend Mother. But a preliminary purification was requisite, and the wise Superior replied: "You must first become a lamb, my child. Otherwise you could not venture to say, *In cujus honorem.* Could our Lord be satisfied with any other victim? No, my dearest daughter. What He wants is a lamb, and it is by dint of gentleness and humility that you will become one."

Madame Duchesne turned to God for help. She had asked her Superior's leave to spend the whole night of Holy Thursday in converse with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. "I hope," she said, "that you will retract that cruel order never to spend a whole night before God. Pray do so in this instance. I must have that whole night. I want leisure to speak to our good Master."

We cannot refrain from reproducing a letter already

* "Be blessed by Him in Whose honour thou art about to be consumed" (Liturgical prayer for the blessing of incense).

published in a preceding work, which Madame Duchesne wrote to her Superior on Good Friday, the morrow of that night of prayer. We cannot omit in her life that eloquent outpouring of a heart to whom God spoke so forcibly during that holy vigil. "Oh, it was indeed a blessed night," she exclaims. "I spent it all in the New World, and I travelled there in good company. First I began by kneeling in the Garden of Olives, the Prætorium, and on Calvary, devoutly collecting all the Blood of Jesus, and taking hold of Him in the Blessed Sacrament. Closely embracing It, I carried everywhere my Treasure, without fear of exhausting It. I saw St. Francis Xavier standing before the throne of God, and I implored him to make this seed grow, and to open to me new countries to work in. St. Francis Regis and many other saints jealous of God's glory guided us on our way. No grief, however holy, could find room in my heart; for it seemed to me that a new application of the merits of Jesus was about to take place. The twelve hours of the night sped rapidly by, although I passed them on my knees, and I felt no fatigue, though it seemed to me the day before as if I could not have remained one whole hour in that posture. I had so many sacrifices to offer up, a mother . . . and what a mother! sisters, relations, and then my own mountain home. I saw myself alone, surrounded by black little savages, and I felt happier in the midst of my infant court than the greatest sovereign in the world. Dearest Mother, when will you say '*Ecce ego mitto te.*' How quickly I shall answer '*Vadam.*' Oh, if it could only be before the end of the year! I almost hoped it would. I am going to try and be sad during the rest of Good Friday, but I don't feel inclined to sorrow; my heart is turned to hope."

It was neither that year, nor for many years to come that these ardent desires were to be fulfilled. A second novitiate was requisite for this new vocation. It proved in

reality one of twelve years during which length of time Mother Barat trained the future missionary as she had previously trained the Spouse of the Sacred Heart.

She set before her spiritual daughter the end which she was to pursue. In this woman, so full of excellent gifts, in this religious blessed with so many graces, in that destiny which the hand of Providence had been so visibly guiding, Madame Barat had discerned the marks of a vocation to no ordinary sanctity. Referring to great saints of previous times, St. Theresa, St. Jane Frances of Chantal, Marie de l'Incarnation, Margaret Mary Alacoque, she says to her: "Are we so far removed from the ages of sanctity, and may we not hope to see some amongst us treading in their footsteps? Shall I own it, my dear child, when I think of the graces our Lord has bestowed upon you since your infancy, I cannot help hoping that as He has given you an affectionate and grateful heart you will love God as some of these great souls have done. The circumstances which you are placed in are somewhat similar to those which contributed to make them saints. A new Order, assisted by men full of the spirit of God, and above all the Heart of Jesus speaking so forcibly to your heart. Come, I will not reproach you, only do not be discouraged. Take up and press to your heart your bundle of myrrh. Renew your vow of consecration to Jesus and to His Cross, and our Lord and His little servant will forgive you." Bossuet said that the object of direction should be to turn the soul incessantly towards eternity and its Sovereign Good, which is God, and that for this end it must be separated from all sensible things, in order to make it love the eternity of God, the Infinite Being of God, so that the soul may desire to be, to live and to breathe only for God." Such were the means, and such the degree to which Mother Barat wanted to advance the sanctification of the future missionary of the Sacred Heart.

Ma bonne et respectable mère

Quel plaisir et quel bien m'a fait votre lettre ! il la falloit pour ranimer mon ame presque insensible qu'un rocher depuis 3 semaines. Elle est fondue comme la cire auprès du feu en se souvenant des alimens que vous lui présentiez ; mes yeux n'ont plus été arides et mon cœur s'est livré à une douce joie, il a savouré toute la suite ; car la lettre est arrivée avant la veille du jeudi saint ô bonté suite ! où j'ai eu une seconde fois the cruche ; je croirois ma bonne mère à la fête parce que je goûte de la sainte espérance que je conçois : et si c'étoit avant la fin de l'année. je m'en suis presque flattée. Toute la suite j'ai été dans le nouveau continent ; mais j'ai voyagé en bonne compagnie. D'abord j'avois précieusement recueilli au jardin, au prétoire au calvaire toute le sang de Jesus, je m'étois emparé de lui aux sacrements je le serrois etroitement et je portois par tout mon trésor pour le répandre sans crainte de l'épuiser. St Xavier s'intéressoit encore à faire fructifier cette précieuse semence et il détenoit au pied du trône de Dieu pour demander l'ouverture de nouvelles terres à éclairer. St François Regis étoit le pilote des voyageurs et bien d'autres saints encore jaloux de la gloire de Dieu m'ont fait tout

allois au mieux ; je n'ai pû assister dans mon cœur
aucune tristesse même sainte parce qu'il me semblait
qu'une nouvelle application alloit se faire de mérites
de Jesus. Les 12 heures de la nuit sont bien vite
passées sans fatigue quoique à genoux et sur la dure
je serois par pouvoir tenir une heure. J'avois
bien à faire aussi avec tous mes sacrifices à offrir
une mère ... et quelle mère ! des sœurs, des parents
une montagne et puis je me trouvois seule avec
Jesus seule environnée des enfants tout noirs tout grossiers
et j'étois plus contente au milieu de ma petite cour
que tous les potentats du monde. bonne mère,
quand vous me direz ecce ego mitto te je vous
répondrai vite vocem. Il faudra bien me faire
à attendre le plaisir de parler de tout cela car
il y en auroit trop pour s'y livrer deplutôt, je n'
aimerois pas qu'on vint à chaque instant parler
à sa mère ; je la voudrois toute pour moi.

Je vais tâcher d'emprunter toute la
reste du vendredi saint ; mais j'y ai peu
de disposition, je suis montée à l'espérance.

Je suis bien respectueusement et tendrement
votre humble et soumise fille
Chil D.

vendredi saint. Le matin -

A missionary must be completely detached from all things, and this diligent teacher sought to dissever her daughter from too strong predilections. We shall see in the following chapter what were those attachments formed by the deepest feelings of nature and grace. The most powerful of these ties was undoubtedly the one which united the hearts of Madame Duchesne and her Superior. Therefore it was that Mother Barat offered herself as the first to be sacrificed. After a second stay of seven weeks at Grenoble and another parting between these friends, more than ever devoted to each other, she wrote to her from Poitiers: "Blessed be Jesus, my dear Philippine! Have you not often said to our Lord since I left you three weeks ago, 'My God, it was necessary that you should separate me from that friend whom I loved indeed in You and for You, but who was likewise an earthly support to me. I will have no one to lean on but You, my God. You must be my only, my sole friend. I will have none other but You!' You have indeed thought hitherto, my dear daughter, that my poor advice was of use to you, and that another would not perhaps have had the same patience in correcting you and bearing with you. But, thank God, you have found out that grace does not flow only through one single channel." And in another letter: "I feel more than ever convinced that no one is really loveable but God, and that we shall never be truly happy till we subordinate all our affections to His good pleasure. If I wish so much to hear from you, it is because I hope that your soul is breaking through the bonds that kept it captive, and that it is beginning to feel that longing the Prophet speaks of, *Quis mihi dabit pennas sicut colombæ?* that yearning for the delightful repose which a soul perfectly detached enjoys even on earth on the bosom of her Beloved."

Mother Barat's firmness never varied. Except during the rare and short visits which she paid to Sainte Marie-

d'en-Haut, she condemned herself to an entire separation from this daughter for whom she had such a strong and earnest affection. She tells her how much she wishes to see her, but that it is not the moment for it. "We must suffer," she says; "and suffer without consolation. If we had faith we should be happy enough." For a moment she was tempted to send for her to Poitiers, where she was staying, but guided by a wiser love, she adds: "You would have been too happy here. Life must not be for you a time of enjoyment;" and she quotes the energetic expression of Holy Writ, "Our Lord wishes you to be a Spouse of Blood."

A missionary is also a man of desires. Always longing and praying for the establishment of the reign of Jesus Christ in distant lands, Madame Barat communicated to her spiritual daughter all she heard as to the progress of the true faith. Sometimes telling her the news which the missionaries wrote home; or, from Bordeaux, where she made a short stay, speaking to her of the holy ambition she felt at the sight of ships bound from that port to remote countries. But whilst she encouraged such generous desires, she still delayed their accomplishment. "Hearing of such things, my child, you will exclaim, 'Oh, how good God is! but you too must be good. Humility, charity, gentleness, and patience must be habitual virtues in the apostles of a new Christendom; everything in it must have the spirit of our Lord." She also endeavoured to bring her into a state of conformity with the Divine will as to going or not going, if God chose to be satisfied with her wishes. Reminding her of Marie d'Agreda, who by the sole merit of her sacrifices obtained the conversion of tribes she had never known, Madame Barat wrote: "Pray for those who are employed in foreign missions; mortify yourself with that intention, and you will work for them at a distance."

Thirdly, the missionary is a man of prayer. What can

he do for souls if he is not himself united to God. Whoever prayed more than St. Francis Xavier? In this respect Madame Duchesne forestalled and went beyond Mother Barat's desires. She converted, as it were, by prayer the souls of future neophytes. She implored to be allowed to watch at night before the Blessed Sacrament. Madame Barat gave her leave to try nocturnal adoration on condition that she should be relieved during part of the time by two of the nuns, but Madame Duchesne not only secured for herself the longest watch, but liked to supply the place of the others, and often forgot when it was time to withdraw. The pupils observed that she was kneeling in the morning exactly in the same position where they had seen her the night before. They used secretly in the evening to put little bits of paper on her habit, which were found the next morning just where they had placed them, and thus afforded a certain proof that she had not stirred during the night. Madame Barat became anxious on the subject, and thought it right to put a stop to the nocturnal adoration at Sainte Marie. This was a great privation to Madame Duchesne, but she understood the motives of her Superior. The only thing that could console her for such a privation was the happiness of making a sacrifice to obedience.

Lastly, a missionary is always in some sense a martyr; he has to endure hunger, thirst, heat, cold and fatigue, and every kind of labour. In this respect also Madame Duchesne forestalled the teachings of her saintly mistress by practising austerities which gratified her thirst for voluntary suffering without ever satisfying it. Her usual sustenance was the crusts of dry bread and the broken victuals left in the nuns' and the children's refectories. She would never wear anything that had not been discarded as too worn out for the use of others, and she worked without interruption. One of the pupils thus describes her life at that period. "This saintly nun," she says, "was employed

in every possible way, both in the community and the school. She was at once Procuratrix, Mistress of the Choir, and Infirmarian; she had the direction of the higher classes of religious instruction, and she also fulfilled the duties of caller, of visitor at night, and secretary."

Mother Deshayes, who was then Superior, states that often in the morning before the hour for meditation she used to see Mother Duchesne weeding the beds in the garden. The Sisters who attended to the domestic duties of the house were sometimes surprised to find in the morning the rooms swept, the bread cut, and the tables laid for the children's breakfast. They used to ask the Superior for some other work, their own having been secretly done in the night by their guardian angel. It was easy to guess who was that mysterious assistant.

As she was the first to rise, Madame Duchesne was the last who retired to rest. Before going to bed she had to attend to the accounts and the correspondence of the house. Sometimes she was so overcome by sleep that her pen wandered unconsciously over the pages of her ledger-book, and sentences such as these: "I love God; I hate the world," were found the next day mixed up with the details of her accounts. Again, it often happened that after visiting the dormitories, looking after and arranging everything, she would fall asleep at the foot of a stone cross in the middle of the parterre on the terrace. When obliged to take rest it was on a board, and with only one covering, winter or summer. During a game of hide and-seek one of the pupils went one day with Madame Duchesne's leave into her cell, and indiscreetly opened a box which contained her instruments of penance. Everything was poor in her room, and it did not even seem as if she slept on the couch which served her for a bed. To those who were afraid for her of such rigorous penances she was wont to say: "Not being permitted to work for

my poor savages, the least I can do is to suffer something for them."

Madame Barat herself was astonished at that life of constant self-sacrifice. In 1807 she wrote from Grenoble to Mother Emilie: "Your good Mother Duchesne teaches in the school all day, sits up at night with the sick children in the infirmary, has the whole exterior mangement of the house, and never seems distressed, and scarcely overworked. What a valiant woman!" She thought it, however, necessary to restrain this excess of mortification, which would have worn out the future apostle before beginning her great work. "Take care of your health," she wrote to her, "and do not fast so as to weaken yourself. I beg also that you will sleep six hours, otherwise I must suppress your hour of adoration in the evening, and insist on your going to bed at the same time as the others." And again, "I was thinking yesterday during my meditation that I have to take care of your body as well as your soul, and that I shall have to answer to our Lord for both of them. Strong as it is, your health could not last for a year if you went on leading this kind of life, and you must preserve it in order to work a long time for the glory of God."

There is one kind of sacrifice from which health has nothing to fear—the interior sacrifice, the circumcision of the heart, as St. Paul calls it. Mother Barat was always exhorting Madame Duchesne to fight against the natural tendency of her character. "You, who so dearly love the good St. Francis of Sales, why have you not acquired his spirit whilst you were in his school? With what sweetness he teaches one to act towards others and towards oneself!"

Madame Duchesne was wont whenever she detected a fault in herself to give way to fits of indignation or discouragement, which only increased the evil. Madame Barat used to remonstrate with her on this point. "Do not," she says, "act like a lion who gets angry and lies

down at the bottom of the pit in which he has fallen. I want you particularly to have patience with yourself. Never be cast down and gloomy when you have done anything wrong, our faults should only increase our humility and trust in God." Towards the nuns, the children, and all those about her, Madame Barat urged the future missionary to show the same forbearance. "Endeavour," she said, "to acquire those virtues which will win the children's hearts, sweetness, serenity, and evenness of soul, which is the fruit of perfect patience, and also that ardent love of Jesus which I long for you to have."

Madame Duchesne listened to this advice, and her humble obedience saved her from the dangers of her character. "And if sometimes," Madame Deshayes says, "she was led by her impetuosity to exceed on the side of severity, she instantly accused herself of her fault to her Superior, and then was sure to be more than usually charitable and kind to everybody."

Her great love of God sweetened to her each cross and sacrifice. She suffered from interior trials, the special cross of loving souls. Her directress was by no means surprised at it, and reminded her that they were a result of the compact she had made with the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"Remember, my child, what took place on the eve of my departure, the feast of the Sacred Heart. The inestimable favour of a special consecration to that Divine Heart was only granted to you on condition that you accepted myrrh from the hand of our Lord, which is better for you than the most exquisite honey." Some months afterwards she again alludes to these interior sufferings, and says, "They are the consequence of many engagements you made with your Spouse, and you must rejoice in them." And in the following spring she writes: "Bear in mind, my dear daughter, that God calls you to bear His Cross. Have you forgotten the words that He has so often

whispered to you, "that you must be a victim immolated for Him. Have you forgotten the solemn promises you have made to follow Him wherever He goes? I can remind you of them, for often and often you have made me a witness and a depositary of these intentions. They have been the ties which have linked our souls together. It is because we both longed to love and suffer that Jesus united us, who were once so far apart."

Not only did Madame Barat exhort her spiritual daughter to the love of our Lord and of His Cross, but she took care to give her an excellent model by placing at Sainte Marie, in the autumn of 1807, a professed nun, whom she had trained herself in the novitiate of Poitiers. Madame Thérèse Maillucheau did not remain on the mountain more than a year, but that year was for Madame Duchesne like a second novitiate. Long devout communing with Jesus, sometimes for six hours running, a continual union with Him, and a daily reception of the sacrament of His love, had raised Mother Thérèse to the highest regions of the spiritual life. Madame Barat wished her dear Philippine to follow that example, and wrote as follows: "As long as you have Mother Thérèse at Sainte Marie she will be to you, and you must be to her, support and consolation. And when she exclaims like the Spouse in the Canticle: *Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis, quia amore langueo*, remember that it is not earthly flowers and fruits she sighs for, but souls which will present to her flowers and fruits of virtue, such as please her Divine Spouse. Oh, how holy we ought to be! If you did but know how ardently I wish it, what efforts you would make to attain sanctity." And again: "Do be convinced, my dear daughter, that in His goodness God wants you to be a great saint. He has brought you into our little Society in order to make it easier to you. . . . There is nothing you cannot arrive at now, if you are only faithful."

Such were the examples, the lessons, and the means which Madame Barat incessantly employed for the sanctification of the future missionary. Before launching this valiant woman on distant seas to meet many a storm in her way to the conquest of souls, it was well to arm, to strengthen, and to prove her, according to the Scriptural simile, *Facta est* (*mulier fortis*) *quasi navis institoris.** She must have sails to speed her course, and anchors to restrain her, a helm for her guidance, and that interior fire which drives the ship onward, despite opposing winds. Was that result arrived at, and was it not time for the bark at last to leave the port? A promising breeze favours departure. It thrills under its breath. Will it now loosen its cable and sail away across the deep? What is it that keeps it back?

We must explain this delay and Madame Barat's wise hesitation. At the same time that she had to train Madame Duchesne to the religious life and to the apostolical virtues we have been describing, she had also to subdue and to soften by means of delay and trials that strong and too impetuous character. Not that she would on any account have extinguished the ardent zeal which was burning in her own heart as much as in Madame Duchesne's, but she hardly thought that the time was come to give it full scope.

In the first place, it was a serious question whether so young a society would not be too much weakened by widely disseminating the elements of which it was composed.

Had there been time enough in twelve years to confirm its spirit, to fix its traditions, to establish its rules? Then, again, was it not requisite to wait for some providential opening which by removing obstacles and preparing the way should indicate God's will in so serious a matter? And as regarded the person herself who was to be the prime mover of such an enterprise, was it clear that she was sufficiently matured to undertake it? She was indeed

* Proverbs xxxi. 14.

learning to obey, but did she possess the quiet self-command, the moderation, the experience required for one who has to govern and direct others. Was it not desirable that she should be schooled yet awhile, and penetrated with that new spirit which she was to exemplify, to inspire, to guard, and, if necessary, to defend in a distant sphere of action? St. Bernard says that zeal, in order to be firm and safe, must be ruled by a prudence which keeps it within bounds, restrains self-will, and governs love itself. This work of prudence was assigned to Madame Barat.

But to be patient and to wait did not suit Madame Duchesne, who made those distant regions more and more the home of her heart. From whatever side news came of foreign lands they only served to fan the flame. On the one hand letters on Tonquin from the Abbé Isoard, and on the other narratives of the progress of religion in China, sent by the Abbé Royer from the Lyons seminary excited her to the utmost. She wrote in her journal: "And shall I ever be able also to do some good in China? Oh, what a happiness it would be to leave everything behind, and to go and work for God's glory without any human interest?

At the same time on every side she sought and gathered encouragement. After a visit from Father Enfantin she writes: "He leads us to hope that we shall one day exercise an apostolate in foreign countries. He has reanimated the zeal of many of the Sisters to undertake that work when obedience gives the signal." Six days afterwards, when Father Varin had been to see them, she says: "That good Father delighted us by promising, as if he spoke by inspiration, that our care of children's souls would not be limited to Europe, but that we should soon perhaps establish ourselves in the colonies." It was probably on this occasion that she asked him to give her a promise that she should be the first of the Sisters sent to the heathen. He made that promise, and she rejoined, "Then, Father, give me a

blessing for that work," and he did so, raising his hand higher than usual."

Madame Duchesne's intense desires were visible in all she said and did. Her talent for painting was enlisted in the cause of this holy passion. She covered the walls of her convent with scenes representing the life and death of St. Francis Xavier. She also drew a picture of nuns embarking on a vessel on which Father Varin from the prow was giving his blessing. When the pupils gathered around her during recreation she spoke to them of the happiness of spreading the Gospel amongst the heathen, and of giving one's life for Jesus Christ. "Who will go with me?" she asked, and the children felt inflamed by her zeal. One of them said later on: "If the ship had been there I think we should all have set off at once."

But it is chiefly in her letters and her conversations with Mother Barat that we find outbursts of that saintly impatience. "I am ready," she wrote to her in 1807, "to set off at a moment's notice, even if I had to walk to the end of the earth." Her Superior used sometimes to say to her with a smile, "I know you have good legs, my dear, but what of sea-sickness during the horrors of a long voyage?" Sometimes she answered evasively, "Do be patient, and remember that God's works progress slowly."

But Madame Duchesne next urged direct orders from Heaven in opposition to these wise delays. We find her writing as follows: "The desire to atone for my sins by a life of suffering, joined to the ardent longing to save souls, made me pray very fervently during the nights of Holy Thursday in 1806 and 1807. I thought those prayers were heard, and that some one by my side was whispering, 'Why do you doubt?' and on the feast of the Assumption: 'It will happen.' On almost every great festival and the feasts of the Apostles this desire always increased after Communion. Tears would fill my eyes, and I asked

myself, 'What does this mean? I have not read, said, or heard anything which could remind me of these thoughts,' and then I recollected that it was the feast of an Apostle."

These appeals had some effect on Madame Barat, whose humility always made her diffident of her own views. After receiving one of these letters she spent twenty-four hours in silent meditation and prayer before replying to it. She then wrote: "I can now answer you with the hope that the Holy Spirit will dictate what I write, and will also speak to your heart." After discussing Madame Duchesne's project for an immediate departure, she goes on to say, with an irresistible amount of good sense and gentle persuasiveness, "It seems to me strange that with your rectitude and sound judgment you can have conceived such an idea, attached yourself to it, and brought yourself to believe it to be the will of God. It comes to this, my dear Philippine, what you propose to do would be to abandon a solid and lasting good in order to go in search of an uncertain result, indeed, almost an impossible one, owing to circumstances which you are not aware of. I will not speak of my own need of you and the assistance I hoped from you in my enfeebled state of health, for personally I only deserve to be abandoned by every one, and though your letter affected me, I should not have hesitated to grant what you ask me, if I thought it was God's will. But everything is against you, as I will explain."

And then she adds the following admirable and truly religious advice: "In the meantime, take as your particular practice abandonment to God's pleasure and perfect conformity to His will. Try to acquire that good spirit, the spirit which is that of the saints, and which consists in understanding that the only way in which we can sanctify ourselves is by following the wishes of our Superiors; that the idea of finding greater perfection in any other course is simply an illusion of the evil spirit in order to prevent us

from making use of present opportunities. My dear Philippine, how much you require guidance! How your imagination carries you away! But I am afraid of giving way to my feelings; I will go and seek consolation at the feet of our Lord, and ask for a soul, so dear to me as yours, all the graces it needs."

We know by the history of the Foundress what were the circumstances she alludes to which militated against Madame Duchesne's projects, and which she promised to explain to her. She had in her mind the crisis which her Society was going through in consequence of the dissensions in the house at Amiens, the ill-will of the Imperial Government, which had just suppressed and banished the Fathers of the Faith, and which was likely at any moment to act in the same way with regard to the nuns of the Sacred Heart. All this justified Mother Barat's delays; she was the first to regret them, and far from discouraging her friend wrote to her as follows: "We shall find means to replace you as soon as our Lord manifests His will with regard to the vocation which attracts you. In the meantime pray and grow in holiness. The grace you seek is worthy of being purchased by such labours as yours, and yet greater efforts. Whether God grants what you long for, or is satisfied with your desires, your abandonment to His will, especially if it is accompanied by works, will not be unfruitful. It will in time produce a hundredfold."

In 1810 the inevitable mitigation of the continental blockade had allowed a merchant vessel to attempt a voyage to the East. Madame Duchesne some time afterwards was informed of this by Father Barat, and she took it into her head and complained that on purpose she had been made to miss a good opportunity. Mother Barat did not think it necessary to justify herself from this accusation, but wrote in a maternal and playful tone of reproach. "Oh, how glad I should be if you showed a more docile and

gentle spirit! Why will you not understand, my dear child, that you will never be able to do anything for God in whatever corner of the earth you may be if you do not practise yourself the virtues you want to teach to others. . . . You hint in an aggrieved manner that I concealed from you the voyage of the commercial travellers,* whom you would have liked to accompany. I heard nothing about it. If I had, those who were going would not have suited you at all. And certainly I should not have allowed you to set off at haphazard on so long a journey. It is not merely a question of setting out. It remains to be considered where one goes and what one will be able to do. I cannot understand how a person of sound sense can let herself be so carried away by her imagination as not to consider what are the means to the end. Fortunately your Mothers think for you, and you are willing to be guided. If it was not for that readiness you would commit wondrous imprudences, and after making perhaps the round of the world people might say of you, in the words of La Fontaine, *Jean s'en alla comme il était venu.*" But always charitable and careful not to discourage the zeal of her friend, in order not to end her letter with reproachful words, Madame Barat hastens to add: "It is possible that your wishes may be realized sooner than we think, many things seem tending to it. Keep yourself if you can in a state of calm preparation, and in that as in everything else entirely resigned to God's good pleasure."

And then she tells Madame Duchesne that M. l'Abbé Montaigne, one of the priests of St. Sulpice, a generous-hearted and clever man, though somewhat harsh in manner, in whom they both had great confidence, had been speaking about her, and that she had felt a sort of pleasure in seeing

* In the correspondences of that period the name of commercial travellers was given from prudential reasons to the priests and religious who were going to the Foreign Missions.

how much interest he took in the subject. "In that peculiar way of his which makes me believe in all his utterances as if they were articles of faith, he said that you were not to give up your hopes, but only to become more humble, more obedient, more mortified and resigned to the will of God in a calm quiet manner, and that our Lord would make known to you what will be most pleasing to Him. Another time he wrote: 'Woe betide her if she should act according to her own judgment.'" And Madame Barat adds: "What he says I also feel. You will see that we shall do nothing unless we proceed slowly and prudently with God's grace."

In the same spirit and with the same object she exhorted her to spare her strength. Since the beginning of 1811 she had obliged Madame Duchesne to go to bed at twelve o'clock, and now she insisted on her retiring to rest at half-past eleven, and also desired her to take during Lent the amount of food permitted at collation, and not to eat dry bread except on Good Friday. "Spare your strength for the great undertaking," she said; "for if you are in too bad a state for it I shall not venture to let you go."

Whilst Mother Barat declared that she could not discern as yet the Divine will on that subject, Madame Duchesne, on the contrary, was inclined to see tokens of it in the most ordinary circumstances. Her intense ardour for what she believed to be her vocation, joined to the workings of her imagination, made her rather credulous in that respect. In the beginning of the year 1811, Madame Barat fell dangerously ill at Ghent, and Madame Duchesne in her prayers for her beloved Superior, stipulated that her recovery would be a sign that our Lord looked favourably on her projects. The humble Mother General did not at all admit that such a wonderful meaning should be attached to the life or death of such a humble individual as herself, and she wrote as follows: "You were wrong, my dear

daughter, to ask for my recovery as a token that your favourite plan is in the order of God's Providence. When He chooses to do so, He will give you much surer signs of it. Why will you not trust your Mother? Remain in peace, carry your cross with courage, and your Divine Spouse will take care of you." Two months afterwards she writes again: "That *yes* which you are sighing for will be said one day; my heart does not give up that hope. In the meantime suffer and wait patiently."

At last Madame Barat was obliged to forbid the continual dwelling on projects which kept her spiritual daughter in a state of constant agitation. We find her desiring Madame Duchesne not to encourage thoughts relative to these plans, not to talk of them to Father Varin or M. Montaigne, and wondering that a person of her age could not moderate the heat of her imagination, which she says, "excites you to a degree which overpowers sound judgment. Suffer if you can peacefully and lovingly. After the storm there will be a calm. Oh, if at least the higher regions of your soul could remain unclouded whilst the tempest rages below. This is often the case with Mount St. Bernard. Courage and confidence. This time of trouble will pass away."

Madame Duchesne, on her side, describes her efforts to obey. "When my wishes were opposed," she says, "I avoided reading anything which tended to nourish them. I tried to deprive myself of all pecuniary means which could afford a hope of success, but it was all in vain." She felt convinced of the reality of the Divine call, and on the other hand was condemned by obedience to turn a deaf ear to it. These heavenly commands and earthly orders seemed at variance, and she felt distracted and torn to pieces between these contending powers. Nothing was left untried to solve the problem. She thought of appealing to Rome. "One day, after Communion, I

made up my mind to write to the Father Vicar-General of the Jesuits at Rome, and beg him to consult the Pope as to my following or stifling my desires." This letter, however, was never sent.

At other times, Madame Duchesne sought in the Holy Scriptures an answer to her doubts. One day, feeling particularly sad and anxious, she went to the Terrace, and sat down to read and meditate by the old well side. There, opposite the mountains, she opened her Bible, and her eyes fell on this passage in the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, "When the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land . . . and shall have given thee great and goodly cities, which thou didst not build, houses full of riches, which thou didst not set up, cisterns which thou didst not dig, vineyards and oliveyards which thou didst not plant. . . . Take heed diligently lest thou forget the Lord . . . " and then her spirits rose. Beyond the snow-capped mountains before her she seemed to see opening an immense horizon. That promised land the Sacred Book speaks of are those distant worlds she sighs for, where she hopes to see the love of Jesus Christ flowing like milk and honey. Houses of the Sacred Heart arising, filled with heavenly treasures, well-springs, and sources of grace. Vines producing glowing fruits of charity and olive trees distilling spiritual unction. "That passage of Holy Writ," she says, "poured into my soul a torrent of consolation." And once again in her life the same words awakened the same gladness. The text which she had read in France, with her eyes fixed on the valley of the Isère, Madame Duchesne read it again as she came in sight of the valley of the Mississippi, and with an overflowing heart thanked God Who is faithful to His promises.

Such was the long preparation, the long trial of that devout soul. Patience, prayer, sacrifice, and contradictions were its distinguishing features, and so it was to be with the

whole course of her apostolic career. And let it not be a matter of surprise that Madame Barat devoted so many years to her spiritual training. During our Lord's life in this world was it not His chief, one might almost say His only work to train twelve men for the Apostolate. A slow and solid preparation was necessary in order that those engaged in so arduous an enterprise should be able to feel, and if necessary to convince others, that they were following a Divine inspiration, and had therefore a right to rely on the assistance of Providence. How little this is thought of by those who go about saying that such heroic resolutions, especially on the part of women, are the result of a sudden fit of enthusiasm, and consider as rash ventures the most sublime acts of self-sacrifice. They might with greater reason wonder at the slow manner in which God proceeds in His works. When His voice is distinctly heard, then of course there must be no holding back, and the Gospel shows us that when Jesus said to His disciples, "Follow Me," they left all and at once followed Him. This was Madame Duchesne's zealous and loving impulse. But it is also written that one who resolves to build a tower, or a king who prepares to go to war must begin by calculating if his means will suffice for the enterprise. Sanctity does not dispense a person from the duty of prudence, and who could venture to blame Mother Barat for attending to its requirements. And now, some one may say: "But what sort of woman was this nun who showed so much eagerness to leave her family and her country? Did she not care for any one or anything? Did she feel none of those tender and affectionate attachments which bind the heart in so sacred a manner to kindred and home? Was hers as hard as a stone and cold as ice? On the contrary, a more loving one never existed, and in the following chapter we shall be able to show how immense was the sacrifice which she was about to make for the love of God.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Madame Duchesne's strong attachments and the sacrifices she had to make. Her family. Her Monastery. Her pupils. Her niece Aloysia.*

When Madame Duchesne described to Mother Barat the sort of vision which had been vouchsafed to her during the night which she spent before the Blessed Sacrament between Holy Thursday and Good Friday in 1806, she said: "I had to make so many sacrifices, first a mother—and what a mother! then sisters, relations, and my dear mountain home!"

These lines reveal to us what were the objects of her deepest love. The departure which she was so ardently longing for involved the prospect of intense suffering, of the most heartbreaking separations. When we see what was her affection for her father, her sisters, and all her relations, then for Sainte Marie, the nuns and pupils especially, for her niece Euphrosyne, the child of her hopes, we shall be able fully to appreciate the generosity of that devoted soul.

To begin with her family. Her aged father had by that time seen his political hopes deceived, and now cared for nothing in this world but his children; and we know with what tender feelings such good but mistaken men are looked upon by those members of their family who have remained faithful to the Church. M. Duchesne had one son and five daughters. His son held the same opinions as himself. His daughters, that is, Madame Amélie de

Mauduit, Madame Charlotte Jouve, Madame Adelaide Le Brument, and Mademoiselle Mélanie Duchesne, were all, like Philippine, earnest Christians and closely united to each other. Her faith and piety seemed to be the life and soul of this whole set of affectionate relatives.

Her own heart, we need hardly repeat it, was in the first instance irrevocably, entirely devoted to God. She rejoiced in the good part she had chosen, but at the same time no one felt more strongly the value of that home-life which it was her greatest merit to have so generously given up. "I need not tell you, my dearest sister," she writes, "how happy I should have been to see you in the midst of your dear ones. But you know that it is a part of my vocation to make sacrifices and to deprive myself of purely natural enjoyments. Instead of the pleasure it would have given me to embrace you, I have the joy of being faithful to my religious obligations and of proving to our Lord that His yoke is sweet, since it is a joy to make sacrifices for the sake of those we love." Occasional visits and frequent letters kept up an intimacy which no length of absence could dissolve. The visits were not frequent, for the sisters lived far apart, one at Lyons, one at Bourg, and another at Grane. Mélanie, who lived at Grenoble, went oftenest to see Philippine, who had brought her up; but the day came when she also took her departure, in order to become a nun of the Visitation at Romans, leaving her elder sister resigned, but deeply affected by this parting. "It is difficult to accustom oneself to such separations," she wrote; "Mélanie's departure is a great trial to me. But she is so happy to be at Romans that hers is much softened. I received yesterday a letter from her. She seems quite enraptured."

Left alone at Grenoble, Philippine keeps up a constant intercourse by letter with her sisters, and if there occurs any interruption in this correspondence, which she con-

sidered a duty, she takes care to assure them that it does not proceed from a want of memory or affection. She writes on one occasion: "My dear sister, it often happens that my position obliges me to omit personal duties in order to attend to less pleasing avocations. But I always rely on your heart perfectly sympathizing with mine and understanding all its feelings, our friendship being so entirely unreserved and free from all misgivings."

There were then strong and deep affections in that heart which at first sight seemed to rise like a rock far above human attachments, lost as it were in the love of God alone. But God was, in fact, both their source and their rule. A pious author lately wrote: "When you ascend from the world to religious life, do not love any one less than you did before. Do not stifle any of your legitimate feelings, only transform them all. You loved your relations as people love on earth. Love them now as saints love in Heaven." Those first and dearest of her neighbours, her relatives, were loved by Madame Duchesne as God wills that we should love Him, with all her mind, with all her heart, with all her strength. With all her mind, for she was their adviser and their guide. We see from her letters how often not only the most venerable women of her family, but also its most remarkable men, for instance, Messieurs Périer, Rollin, and Jordan, went to Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut to obtain from Philippine those lights which seem to be given to souls living in a higher sphere and nearer to God than others. She writes one day: "Camille Jordan was so good as to call upon me yesterday. He confirms all I had heard as to his brother Noel's zeal, piety, and talents." The name Jordan often occurs in her letters. When, later on, Camille was wont boldly to speak in the Chamber of Deputies of the highest religious truths, too often obscured by brilliant errors, did not the eloquent orator revert in thought to the saint of

his family and those pious conversations at Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut?

Madame Duchesne loved her relatives with all her heart. She entered into all their joys and shared all their sorrows. To her sister, Madame de Mauduit, who was trembling for the life of her son, she writes: "My dearest sister, I trust that if you throw yourself and all your anxieties into the arms of God, He will not allow your trials to exceed your strength, and that, at the very moment when you feel most overwhelmed with grief, He will establish you in perfect peace. It is because you are pleasing to God that He thus tries you. I feel anxious about Adrien. You wanted him to be a priest, and perhaps God means to make him an angel. But no, pray earnestly to St. Francis Regis, and he will cure your dear child." To Madame Jouve, who was alarmed at the prospect of an increase of her family, she says: "My hope is, dearest sister, that the child you are expecting will prove the Joseph or the St. Bernard of your family. A special blessing from God seems to rest on numerous families, and it is often the younger children in whom He shows forth the wonders of His grace, for His ways are not as our ways. He chooses what is weak and little in preference to what is strong. If it is a saint you are about to bring into the world you will be amply rewarded for your additional cares."

And then Madame Duchesne loved with all her strength. Not satisfied with advising and comforting her sisters, she assisted them to the utmost of her power. Her greatest wish, she says in one of her letters, is to help her dear relatives in the education of their children. To the same sister she writes: "I feel for all your troubles, and should like in every possible way to lighten them. This is what I have thought of doing. I could so arrange my affairs as to increase a little my income, so that in the spring I

should be able to manage Constance's pension." Then, after explaining in a delicate manner why her sister need not scruple to accept her offer, she adds: "We must not reckon too closely when we want to do good. God repays with usury. We only regret that your little boys cannot belong to us too."

The time had now come when the head of her family, her venerable father, who was more than seventy years of age, was to be removed from this world. This proved a terrible trial to Madame Duchesne, and it drew forth the strongest evidences of her filial affection and Christian piety. In 1813 she had begun to observe signs that age was telling upon him, and wrote as follows to one of her sisters: "I had yesterday the agreeable surprise of a visit from my father. I found him looking still young in the face, but I can see that his legs are stiff, and that he finds it difficult to walk down the hill. I cannot realize that he is growing old. His goodness makes one wish that he should live to a great age; but alas! the joy of every meeting is disturbed by thoughts of separation and death." Many years afterwards, in America, she looked back to the last visits her father had paid her—it may be to this one—and called to mind with deep emotion the tone in which that dear parent had said, as he left her: "Good-bye, Philippine." At the end of the winter of 1814, Madame Duchesne received the news that her fears had not deceived her. The good old man was dying. Now all his daughter's care and thought was to induce him to make a Christian end. Her young niece Euphrosyne shared her anxiety, and we find her writing to her mother: "The two Masses you asked for, dear mamma, have been said at Fourvières. I am continually praying for our dear sufferer, for that dearest grandfather to whom nothing would be wanting if he would only give up that wretched philosophy, the enemy of religion. I hope that such a change now

will be his reward for all the good qualities which have made his children so happy, and which would be great virtues if once they were sanctified by Christian faith."

Madame de Mauduit and Madame Jouve were both with M. Duchesne, and it was granted to Philippine, the rule of the Society making it at that time possible, to visit him also on his death-bed. She spoke to her aged father of his soul with all the eloquence of her strong and ardent faith, animated by the deepest affection and a sense of the danger and importance of those last moments. She succeeded, and M. Duchesne, in an open, generous, and complete manner, effected his reconciliation with God, and rejoiced the faith and hearts of his daughters by a thorough conversion. Euphrosyne Jouve said in a letter to her mother: "It is wonderful that grandfather should have made up his mind to this courageous act. One cannot help seeing in it the work of God, Who holds and directs the hearts of men. May God grant our prayers and restore him to health, so that he may act up to his new convictions in the eyes of the world."

But M. Duchesne's illness increased, and Philippine went back a second time to assist her father in his last hours. On the 2nd of March she wrote to her sister Charlotte: "What I hear of my father's state makes me very sad. I think, dearest sister, that one of us ought to sit up with him. You did so last night. Amélie is ill. I ought therefore to be with him, and I can do so, for our Mother Superior agrees to it. So if the night seems likely to be a trying one, or if he is to receive our Lord during the night, you must send for me at half-past eight. Let me know if M. le Curé came this morning, and do not put off the ministrations of the Church. This is our principal duty, and also to say to him now and again a word about God. The most pious persons require this sort of assist-

ance, for the mind becomes absorbed by suffering and the devil is ever on the watch."

Philippine thus describes her father's last moments: "His agony was long and sharp. For several days he did not speak, and seemed to have terrors. Extreme Unction was given to him in time, and a second and third absolution with the plenary indulgence. His funeral has been simple on account of the present state of things and the reasons against ringing the bells. It was on the 29th of March. I trust that God has mercifully received his soul."

That 29th of March was the very day on which Grenoble opposed an heroic resistance to twenty thousand Austrians who were invading the frontiers of France on that side. From his death-bed the aged Republican Deputy could hear rumours which presaged the fall of the Empire against which he had voted in 1803. By a wonderful grace he had turned in his last days to that God Whose reign has nothing to fear from men or the vicissitudes of life.

We can deduce from the preceding pages that the noble-hearted woman, whose history we are relating, was a devoted daughter and an affectionate sister. She was also a loving mother to the spiritual family she had assembled within the old walls of Sainte Marie. That little community had become more and more dear to her as it advanced in sanctity, which had been the case ever since the holy Pope Pius VII. on his way though Grenoble had especially blest it. Madame Duchesne thus describes this memorable day. "Carried away from Rome by the Emperor, the captive Pontiff arrived in our town on the 20th of July, 1809, at four o'clock in the afternoon. As he was to sleep at the prefecture, just opposite to our windows, on the other side of the Isère, we could see his carriage surrounded with gendarmes." This sight awakened in Madame Duchesne's heart that unalterable devotion which the persecutions directed against the Church, in the person of her Supreme

Head, have ever aroused in all true Catholics. It seemed as if the illustrious prisoner had guessed it, for his attention and his blessings were constantly directed towards the convent on the opposite hill. "We had the happiness," Madame Duchesne writes, "of lending a Missal and cruets for the Holy Father's Mass on the following morning. Madame de Vaulserre, who lived in our house, was admitted to see him, and obtained leave from the captain to repeat her visit the next day and to bring with her Mother Deshayes. She went there dressed not as a nun but in a black dress like a widow. The Pope received her in the most paternal manner. She kissed his feet, and he gave her several times also his ring to kiss, and then on the third day all our pupils, sixty in number, walked in order to the prefecture, dressed in white and wearing black veils. When they were all ranged in a line the Pope came in, laid his hand on the head of each of them in turn, and gave them his ring to kiss as they knelt before him in a semi-circle. They then withdrew, some of them not having ventured even to raise their eyes to his face. All the other inmates of our house used to receive every evening the blessing he gave from the window to the immense crowd which assembled to receive it. From our heights, though at a great distance, we could see him quite distinctly. We observed that he looked at our house, and seemed to bestow upon it a particular blessing. On the 30th of July he blest a large basketful of pious objects which we had sent for that purpose. There was a report that day that he was going to be set at liberty, but on the 1st of August, the feast of St. Peter's Chains, we heard that he had been obliged to start at four o'clock in the morning, having only had notice of it a few moments before."

How great would have been Madame Duchesne's joy at that time if she could have foreseen that ten years after-

wards she would receive on the banks of the Mississippi, a new and fruitful blessing from the same Holy Father once more restored to Rome and to his throne.

She wrote to her sister that the Pope's involuntary visit had produced throughout all the country the effects of a mission. "There is more faith everywhere and a greater number of confessions since he has been seen. God has drawn good out of evil. Our long experience of His goodness leads us to hope that He will restrain the effects of His justice and not for ever punish us." When her relatives offered her an asylum in the event of fresh persecutions, she answered: "We thank you for your kind solicitude in our behalf, but we live here very quietly day after day, looking on ourselves as the children of God's providence, which has made this house subsist without visible means. If He destroys it, well and good. He is our Master. In the meantime we feel quite secure."

Never had the house of Sainte Marie given so much joy to its Foundress as at the very time when her missionary ardour made her sigh and pray to leave it for ever for the sake of God. By its means the Sacred Heart was making numerous and valuable recruits. It was just then that three admirable women, Madame Louise de Portes, Madame Christine de Crouzas, Madame Angélique Lavauden, together made their vows on the feast of St. John the Evangelist, December 27th, 1812. Sœur Chatain, a humble Lay-sister, also came to Grenoble, and began there her long life of devotion to the Society. Mother Chauvin also was considered to be a saint. Nothing discouraged or perplexed her; she had the care of the linen room, and notwithstanding great poverty, she always found means of supplying every body with what they wanted. Our Lord, Who inspired this meek soul with His own spirit of charity seemed to delight to be with her. The chaplain of the convent observed several times that when He was giving Holy

Communion the Sacred Host left his hands and placed Itself on the lips of one of the nuns. He asked the name of this religious. It was the good Mother Chauvin. A holy secular widow resided at Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut, who made herself useful in many ways to the nuns as a means of communication between them and the world, and assisted them also in the external and internal works of charity. This Madame de Vaulserre belonged to a family famous for its devotion to the Holy See, and which had enjoyed the honour of lodging Pius VI. when he too had been brought as a prisoner to Grenoble. She taught admirably well a class of from twenty to thirty poor girls, and arranged everything with the parents of the day scholars. In her deep humility, Madame de Vaulserre called herself the convent dog, and looked on even the Lay-sisters as greatly her superiors. She spoke to every person in the house, Madame Duchesne tells us, with a deference most admirable in a person of her birth, education, and ability.

One of the mistresses of the school was also tenderly loved and intensely regretted by Philippine. Madame du Terrail was a descendant of the Chevalier Bayard, and like him she served her Divine Master without fear or reproach. She died of an illness brought on by the excessive fatigue she underwent in teaching the children and instructing the poor. Her special characteristic was an ardent love for souls. Madame Barat wrote to Madame Duchesne after this nun's death: "And so our dear sufferer is in Heaven, my dear Philippine! What an advantage this will be to you! She will not forget all the tender care you lavished upon her, and if a glass of water given in God's name is not left unrewarded, how much more will acts of charity of a higher order be recompensed by our Lord?"

Madame Duchesne's devotion to the children was equally great; she laboured for them as if the thought of leaving her school had never crossed her mind. Madame Barat had

said to her: "How much it must excite your zeal to feel that you can show your love to the Divine Master by toiling for those little ones for whom His Blood was shed," and full of that idea there was nothing too humble or too tedious she did not love to do for them. One of her pupils says: Our Mothers having arranged to separate from the rest the youngest and most unmanageable children, Mother Duchesne took charge of this wild set and never lost sight of them. If any of us were ill, she was nurse and infirmarian, and used to sit up half the night by the sick bed. Especially if there was anything disgusting in an illness she never gave up what she called her rights. We have seen her nursing with the tenderest care two of our companions who had contagious diseases, and were supported by the house. It was she also who gave most animation to our play hours, joining in our games with the most charming gaiety."

Thus conducted, Sainte Marie became a great school of virtue and Divine love. Many of these young scholars belonged to families of hereditary faith and virtue whose attachment to religion had deepened and intensified during the fiery ordeal of the Revolution. One man of high rank who was often seen in the parlour of Sainte Marie was venerated for his sanctity in all the neighbouring country. This was the Marquis de Vidaud, who after the death of his admirable wife, Gabrielle de Lavalette, had placed at the school of the Sacred Heart his two little girls, Louise and Zoé. Whenever he came to see them it was always observed that during the time he was waiting in the parlour he took out of his pocket the *Imitation*, or some other pious book, and read a chapter from it. When his daughters appeared, he encouraged, exhorted, amused them in every possible way, gave them money for the poor, and before going away he made them kneel down and say a short prayer, blessing them at the same time with a

reliquary, which he always carried about with him. A few days after the Pope's passage through Grenoble he wrote to his youngest daughter: "I have great hopes, dear Louise, that the blessing of our Holy Father the Pope, which you have had the happiness of receiving so closely, will bring you some peculiar blessing." That blessing proved to be a vocation to the religious life.

This great grace was about to be bestowed on one dearer perhaps than any one else to Madame Duchesne, the niece on whom she had spent her most assiduous labours, the child of her dearest affections, and on that account, the occasion of the most painful of the sacrifices she was destined to make at the hour of her final separation from all she loved on earth. Young Euphrosyne Jouve, whose early promise as a child we have already spoken of, had become the pride of Sainte Marie's school. Madame Duchesne had educated her most most carefully both with regard to the highest mental cultivation and habits of practical usefulness. If in Philippine's letters to Madame Jouve she speaks of her little girl studying eagerly the Latin and Italian languages, of her drawing and proficiency in every branch of learning, needlework is also spoken of as equally important; her extracts from Homer's *Iliad* and the dresses she can make are mentioned in the same letter. Evidently proud of her beloved pupil, Madame Duchesne anticipates that she will be a remarkable person, and asks her mother what she thinks of her.

But what she chiefly attended to was the correction of her niece's defects. Euphrosyne, her aunt tells us, was a true Duchesne in more respects than one. "She has a sort of stiffness of character which gives her sometimes an appearance of arrogance. It is not easy to influence her, she is not obliging, her manners are abrupt, and she is sometimes impatient and obstinate. There is more solidity than sensibility in her disposition, more faith than tender-

ness in her piety." This is the description Madame Duchesne gives at one time of her young niece; but on the 10th of August, 1808, she says: "Euphrosyne is much improved in every way, likes to oblige, and thinks that it will be the greatest happiness to her when she is with you to make herself useful to her mother." It was the approach of her first Communion which had wrought this change in Euphrosyne. She made it on the 8th of September of that year and that great event completely transformed her. One of her companions says that during the preparatory retreat she spoke of nothing but God and her ardent desire to belong to Him without reserve. The thought of sin made her shudder, and one day kneeling down beside one of her friends who was praying, she said with tears: "Let us beg of God in this retreat sooner to die than to sin again;" and when they wanted her to come and play, she exclaimed: "Oh, let me weep over my sins, I do not want amusement." On the day of her first Communion she kept saying: "I am so happy that I do not think in Heaven itself one can be happier! I feel that Jesus Christ has granted me the grace I asked of Him." "What grace do you mean?" "The grace to die rather than offend God."

From that time forward she conceived a tender devotion for St. Aloysius Gonzaga, which gradually worked in her a resemblance to that model of religious innocence. It was in imitation of that angelic young Saint that she resolved to consecrate her life to God. One evening after hearing Mother Theresa, the Mistress General, speak eloquently of the happiness of virgins, Euphrosyne told one of her companions that she would have no other Spouse than Jesus Christ. This was during play hours and whilst they were in the garden under the shade of an old pear tree. In after times Euphrosyne used often in her letters to revert to "that beautiful evening under

the great pear tree of the terrace." When a friend congratulated her on one occasion on the number of crowns she had won at the distribution of prizes, Euphrosyne kissed her and said: "Far more beautiful will be those we shall wear when we follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." But her family had other plans and ideas, and withdrew her from school. Her aunt was sorry, but not afraid for her when she returned to Lyons; she knew her to be well armed for the battle of life. "Euphrosyne," she wrote, "will not be carried away by the world. Her strength of character, her thoughtful disposition will not admit of any fluctuations in her principles. I hope she will be a great comfort to you, but do not expect from her minute attentions and little endearing ways, do not look forward to have all the sweetnesses of life joined in her case with eternal hopes. Children come into this world only to pass into the next. We must be satisfied with what is essential. Euphrosyne is made for great things."

This letter, whilst it speaks of Euphrosyne's strength of soul, does not seem to do justice to the intense goodness of her heart. She writes herself in a very affectionate way to her mother, looking forward to her return to her home, though asking to delay it a little. "My dearest mamma, I feel what a pleasure it will be to you to rest your cares on your child, and after having done so much for her education, to enjoy at last the result of your labours. My object in asking you to remain at school till the end of the year was to try and become more worthy of assisting you by improving myself as much as possible. It is with great regret I leave you, but my heart is at home. I should like to throw my arms round your neck, and to tell you, instead of writing it, that I love you more than I can express." And in a subsequent letter from Grane, she says: "I look forward with delight to the approaching time when I shall be at home. I am making all sorts

of plans for my god-daughter sister. You must let me bring her up entirely, dearest mamma. I want to have the whole care of her, to have her always with me, to be quite a second mamma to her. This will give you rest, and it will oblige me to be very discreet and reasonable. My greatest desire will be to please you, and if my affection and good conduct make you happy, I shall indeed rejoice."

She kept her word, and proved a perfect specimen of an active, amiable, industrious girl, fitted to fulfil the part of a parent and to make the happiness of a home. She became quite a second mother to her infant brothers and sisters. In a letter to Madame Jouve she relates little details as to her government of this small family, with an engaging playfulness which makes us venture to give them in her own words: "The night you went away, I could not comfort the little ones without taking them all into my bed. I hoped Josephine would have let me off this time, but no, 'Bed, bed, godmother,' went on as usual, and I was obliged to submit. So there were four heads in one night-cap, and every one wide awake. I thought at first we should have had to get up again. Eugène had begun a conversation with his sister which ended in his beating and then kissing her, till at last he grew tired and fell asleep, which he did with poor Josephine's nose in his hand, and then they all slumbered off." Joined to these domestic details we find serious reflections on the events of the war, the French campaigns and the approach of the enemy through the valley of the Rhône. Euphrosyne, as her aunt had said, had a soul and mind fitted for great things, though at the same time she could lend herself to the performance of the humblest duties.

By the advice of a zealous missionary priest, M. l'Abbé Fauvet, she joined an association of young women whom he catechized every Sunday in the church of the Carthusians,

and did the work of an apostle among them by her example and her teachings. She also instructed a number of poor people. "I do not know what her destiny will be," M. Fauvet used to say; "but I think God has great designs on that soul." Euphrosyne was much admired, the world lavished upon her compliments and attentions of all sorts, but the secret vow of virginity she had made in 1810, on the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, rendered her proof against all its attractions. "I am ashamed," she said, "to think that my Mother Mary made that offering of herself at the age of four years, and that I did not do so till I was more than fourteen."

Courageous penitential practices armed her also against the world. To lie on thorns, to bruise her tender body was what she called "to gather flowers from the tree of the Cross." When I read the Life of my dear St. Aloysius," she once said, "I feel such a wonderful desire to suffer that if I listened to it I should buy all M. de Ferrus' shop." M. de Ferrus was a pious layman, who sold in Lyons this strange sort of merchandise.

So angelic was her piety, so apostolic her life, so austere her penance, that Euphrosyne seemed ready made for the religious life; but the love of her mother, and the fear of giving her pain, compelled her to repress her desire, and to keep it secret. The effort was so great, that it affected her health, and she became dangerously ill. Madame Duchesne guessed what was the matter with her, and wrote as follows to her sister: "My dearest, in the midst of your fears for the life of your daughter, did it never occur to you to offer her to God, as it seems so little in the power of men to preserve her life if she remains in the world? Euphrosyne has never told me her secrets, but I have reason to suspect that she thinks of retiring from it. She said one day in my hearing that the virtue she loved beyond all others was chastity. Without mentioning what I

have said, you could find out what is the case, and consider how far your courage could bear such a sacrifice. Who knows that it may not be a secret struggle which causes her illness?"

It was only from surmises that Madame Duchesne spoke in this letter, but when Euphrosyne recovered her health a little, she wrote to her aunt, informing her of her intentions, and begging her to obtain the consent of her parents. Madame Duchesne could not turn a deaf ear to her request; with all the strength of her faith and the warmth of her feelings, she prepared to fulfil the painful duty of running, as she feared, a dagger into the heart of the poor mother. She performed it in the tenderest and most considerate manner. "My dearest sister, what I had only suspected turns out to be true. Euphrosyne wants to leave you, not for an earthly husband, but in order to give herself to God, Who she feels has the first right to that consecration. Her only difficulty is her tender love for you, and she dreads to speak to you about it. I have therefore undertaken to do so, knowing that I am addressing the most loving of mothers, but, at the same time, a Christian mother, accustomed to the most heroic acts of resignation. I am not going to preach to you, dear sister, I leave it to God's grace to influence the hearts of both mother and daughter. . . ." Then alluding to the unsettled state of politics in France, she adds: "Is there anything settled and unchangeable on this earth? If you are displeased at my openness, forgive me. I have long been accustomed to look upon God as our sole end in everything, and I am not afraid of offending you by setting Him thus before your eyes in the particular case of your beloved daughter."

Madame Jouve's answer was that of a Christian, though deeply afflicted mother. Madame Duchesne wrote in reply: "My best of sisters, in the midst of the grief your

letter expresses I find the same admirable spirit as in the one you wrote to me when God seemed to be about to take your child from you in a much more painful manner. I was struck with your generous resignation, and yet I am not a mother. God intends, I suppose, to increase your merit and double your reward by thus requiring of you, though in a different manner, a great sacrifice. I need not remind you of the words of the most afflicted of men in regard to his children, his property, and his person: 'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.' If God offered to an affectionate mother a marriage for her daughter with a most charming prince, which would, however, necessitate a separation from herself, would she not forget her own suffering, and rejoice in her child's happiness? Why is it so dreadful to give oneself to Jesus Christ? Where is our faith?" And in answer to the argument that Euphrosyne is delicate, she says: "Her health has suffered from a painful apprehension of your suffering. When she left our house she had a nervous attack, which I ascribed to the keenness of her feelings;" and then she adds in the same letter: "Though I plead her cause, I however fully enter into your maternal grief, and understand what a crushing sorrow it is to part with the one of your children from whom you could expect most consolation. You may feel certain of one thing, and that is that this blow comes straight from God. Euphrosyne's soul is not of the sort that can be influenced by others, she judges for herself. There is nothing earthly, nothing mean in her ideas. The wishes she has formed come from God, and He makes us feel that He governs hearts as He pleases. Ought we not to be glad that He deems her more worthy than others to be united to Him, and that He grants her this grace? I hope that your husband and you will consider more dispassionately that your children belong to God before they belong to you. Your husband tells me

that you would have given Henry to God. Now He wants Euphrosyne. Earthly sovereigns take your children away without consulting you."

It was some time before Madame Jouve answered this letter. Her sister was neither offended nor surprised at her silence; she waited patiently for her next communication, and then wrote to her as follows: "Never be anxious as to my feelings towards you, dearest sister. I was not the least inclined to complain of your silence, for whilst as a religious I admire the work of grace in your daughter and in you, to whom God gives the courage to consent to this separation, as a friend and a sister I shared the bitterness of your grief, and begged of our dear Lord to soften the wound He inflicts by making your sacrifice a source of blessing to your family."

The separation was indeed about to take place. In the world people said that Euphrosyne was too charming to give herself to God. She allowed them to talk on, and remained, as her aunt describes her, "firm in her intentions, but without any of that eagerness which is oftener the result of nature than of grace. Suffering deeply in her heart, she concealed it by dint of courage, but when her mother's letters were shown to her, she could not restrain her feelings, and gave way to tears." Madame Duchesne goes on to say: "Euphrosyne never had the least inclination to marry. Her passion was always to instruct the poor, and martyrdom was her desire. I one day gave as a subject of composition to her class an exhortation to martyrdom. What she wrote was so full of high and noble feeling that it was not mere talent which inspired it, but something far above human aspirations. At the time of the violent persecution against the Church and the Pope, she used to smile at the prospect of having the opportunity of dying for her faith. You must not be surprised if she never spoke to you in that strain; it is not easy to do so to our parents. We suffer from the fear of making them

suffer. Do not give way to any bitter thoughts, but bless God that you have had the opportunity of making Him so pleasing a gift, and that the offering of thanksgiving He had a right to expect from you is ever in His presence,"

A month after the date of this letter, we find in the Journal of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut "that on the 25th of December, 1814, four postulants entered the novitiate, Mdlles. Euphrosyne Jouve, Olympie Rombau, Rosalie Meneroud, and Octavie Berthold. One of these postulants was to go later on with Madame Duchesne to the foreign missions, and her niece, whose longings for martyrdom we have just mentioned, was to offer herself as a victim for the success of the enterprise. After seven months, on the feast of the Transfiguration, August 6th, 1815, Euphrosyne received the veil from the hands of her aunt. Madame Duchesne wrote that day to Madame Jouve: "My dearest sister, as a Christian mother, and one full of faith, you will gratefully thank God for a sacrifice very hard to the heart, but which will make the happiness of your child. It is not to a man you have given her, but to God, and can we look upon as lost what one always finds in Him, and which He will one day give back with ample interest. Euphrosyne feels all you do for her, and the generosity of her sacrifice does not prevent her from sympathizing intensely and tenderly with her mother."

A council of the Society was at that moment about to be held in Paris, and Madame Duchesne went there with Mother Bigeu, who was then Superior at Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut. On the 26th of October, 1815, she left her beloved mountain without the least idea that she should never see it again. The hour fixed by Providence was now close at hand.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Madame Duchesne's sojourn at Paris. Her earnest entreaties to be sent to the foreign missions. Aloysia's sufferings. Monseigneur Dubourg's arrival. Her departure for Louisiana decided upon.*

1815—1817.

On her way from Grenoble to Paris Madame Duchesne spent a few days at Lyons with her sister Charlotte and her husband and children who, as if they foresaw that they should never behold her again, lavished upon their dear Philippine every possible mark of affection. She wrote afterwards to Madame Jouve: "I was refreshed after my first steps into the world by my short visit to you. I have made acquaintance with all your dear children, and enjoyed for a brief moment the happiness of being with you. Who knows if it will ever happen again? Thanks to your and my dear brother's kindness I suffered no inconvenience during my journey. I parted company with my first fellow-travellers with rapture, with those on the boat with pleasure, and with those on land without regret. The officer of engineers was the best of them. He had at any rate the manners of a well-educated man. And here I am at Paris! I feel ashamed to be here. The noise and bustle of a great city does not suit those who love solitude. It seems to tyrannize over one's soul."

Madame Duchesne had cherished a secret hope that at Paris she would obtain what was the constant object of her desires. "During the journey," she says, "there were

moments when my heart swelled with joy at the thought that perhaps God would bring about at Paris the negotiations relative to the American missions." This was ever her first, her ardent desire. When Mother Emilie Giraud, her former pupil and novice at Sainte Marie, arrived for the General Council in 1815, Madame Duchesne had no sooner caught sight of her than she exclaimed, "Well, Emilie, we are really going to the foreign missions, and you must go too." Emilie bowed her head, and said in a low voice, "I only wish to do God's will." This did not quite satisfy her old mistress, who retorted rather sharply: "What! is that all that remains of your valiant ardour of former days? What has become of your passionate longings for the conversion of the heathens? Come, I see what it is: you are too fond of that wretched house of yours at Niort and your Mother Geoffroy." Madame Duchesne was named by the Council Secretary-General of the Society, which fixed her residence at the mother-house in Paris.

"It grieved me," she wrote, "for I thought that this was done in order to put a stop to my beloved plans." One day she spoke again on the subject to the Superior-General, and implored her to let her go. Madame Barat tried to show her how greatly she was wanted for the new mother-house in Paris, and what insurmountable difficulties attended for the present her projects of departure and of a foreign foundation. "Wait and pray," she again said, "Do not ask me to do anything." Madame Duchesne answered: "I only beg for one word, 'Go,' the grace of obedience will supply the rest."

It was becoming more and more difficult to restrain her ardent zeal. In a letter to her sisters at Grenoble Madame Duchesne says: "Generally speaking God grants only one great grace during life, and for me that grace has been my return to Sainte Marie and our admittance into the Society of the Sacred Heart. This was already much more than I

could have ventured to hope, but in spite of all my infidelities our Lord opens to me a new path, which calls forth all my gratitude, and fills me with astonishment. Already many bishops, amongst others Mgr. d'Astros, to whom our Mother kindly introduced us, commend our proposed voyage, and bless our projects."

Everywhere she asked for prayers in behalf of her intentions. The council was held in the house of the Sisters of St. Thomas of Villanova, and begging her Sisters at Grenoble to pray much to the Blessed Virgin and St. Francis Regis, she adds: "I have shed many tears about America before the picture of our Lady in this convent chapel, where St. Francis of Sales obtained deliverance from his temptations. I owe much to these prayers I think, and to those I made at Montmartre."

Going about a great deal, as she was obliged to do in Paris on the business of the new house, she visited sanctuary after sanctuary, pouring forth at each holy shrine her sorrow and her desires at the feet of the Mother of God. "Before making a fresh application," she wrote, "I resolved to make a novena of Communions in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin in St. Sulpice. "I prayed with earnest supplications there, and also before Mary's images at St. Thomas, at Montmartre, at the Carmelites, and the Church of the Foreign Missions, trying to remain in a state of indifference, but always ending by a resolution to brave all human respect, and to bear every mark of blame or coldness so that on my part there may be no obstacle to a favourable result. When I found Father Varin so opposed to my wishes I went to St. Sulpice, and sorrowfully said to the Blessed Virgin: 'You have deceived me, Holy Virgin! The more I have invoked you the stronger has become my vocation, and yet you see how my desires are opposed.' I had not finished this remonstrance before I heard in my heart a voice saying, 'My child, this is because you have

not done what you ought.' I understood then that I had relied too much on my own efforts, that I ought to leave everything to my Superior, and this quieted me. I spoke to her again on the subject, and she held out hopes to me,"

Meanwhile the foundation which the Sacred Heart was making in Paris, in a little house of the Rue des Postes near Sainte-Geneviève was proceeding slowly and in the midst of many difficulties. Some of Madame Duchesne's relatives, men of business and of the world, but little conversant with the way in which God's works are conducted, thought this a bad omen for the future success of the establishment. This was not Madame Duchesne's opinion, and she speaks her mind very plainly on the subject in a letter to her sister, Madame Jouve: "I know that Augustin Jordan is surprised at this slowness, and that moreover he does not like the diversity and multiplicity of religious houses. I spoke to him about it, and argued against this and many other ideas of his which are those of a regular man of the world. It is sad to see seculars presume to judge their Fathers in the faith, and meddle with ecclesiastical affairs. As to our house, does he suppose that so complicated an establishment can be organized, and obtain favour in three months, for we have only had the house since April, and did not live in it till July? Does he find himself that he succeeds at once in all he undertakes? Do not let him, then, augur badly for us. We must build our works on strong foundations of humility and patience, and then we are in a condition to bear success without danger."

We find at this period in Madame Duchesne's correspondence with her family the name of one who was destined to have a great, an increasing, and at last a predominating influence on her apostolic life. Towards the end of May, 1816, Madame Jouve spoke to her sister of a missionary priest who had been recently named Bishop of New Orleans.

He was preaching at Lyons with extraordinary success. The charity of the inhabitants of that great commercial city was strongly excited in his behalf and that of his flock. An association in aid of the propagation of the faith had in consequence arisen, and a great many priests were preparing to accompany to his diocese the apostle of Louisiana. This intelligence moved Madame Duchesne's soul almost like an electric shock, and she wrote in reply: "You gave me great pleasure by speaking to me of Mgr. Dubourg. Augustin has also said a great deal in his praise. We had hoped he would come to Paris, but the disturbances in his diocese have perhaps changed his plans. Still, we hear that the Government of the United States wishes to come to an understanding with the Pope, and that the Catholic faith increases very much in that part of the world." It was evident that the announcement had awakened her hopes, and that her heart was in those American regions. In the meantime she was making ready for a departure, the moment or the exact object of which was still unknown to her, though a strong presentiment led her to feel it was at hand.

First she arranged her family affairs, and prepared for a final separation by an act of generosity. We find her writing to Madame de Mauduit: "I am sighing for an entire release from temporal affairs. Our souls suffer from that pressure, and Clement XIV. was right when he said that 'Amidst earthly cares our hearts become earthly.'" To Madame Jouve she had already said in 1814: "I want to settle my temporal affairs so as to have no troubles of conscience. In giving the world up entirely I should have liked to leave my dear sisters in more affluent circumstances, but the wisdom of God's providence, which does all things for the best, has ordained it otherwise, choosing to detach you beforehand from earthly goods."

In 1816 she wrote to Madame de Mauduit: "Our

Society, my dear sister, is not in the habit of driving sharp bargains with relatives, and for my part I have always cared more for the interests of those I love than for my own. It has always been a pleasure to me to give up."

In accordance with this spirit Madame Duchesne did give up all her fortune, present and future, to her brothers and sisters in exchange for a limited sum which she meant to devote to her dear undertaking and to a dowry for Euphrosyne, which was to be settled upon her when she made her solemn vows. "I am sure I shall never be in want," she said with her usual generosity, "and if I have a few privations to suffer, I shall be very glad to practise my vow of poverty."

Free now from earthly cares, Madame Duchesne devoted her whole solicitude to those distant missions which seemed to breathe into her soul across the ocean a perfume such as navigators are conscious of when drawing near to a yet unseen coast. On the 4th of August, 1816, she wrote to her niece Euphrosyne that Benediction had been given in the house at Paris by the Superior of the Foreign Missions, who had showed her letters from China and related the martyrdom of a bishop in Sutchen. From Pondicherry an application had arrived for Jesuit missionaries, and the Colonial Minister, M. Lainé, also asked for priests for the French colony in Senegal. These appeals, these proofs of zeal delighted Madame Duchesne. "Oh, do tell all our children to pray for the foreign missions," was her pressing recommendation to Euphrosyne Jouve.

She knew that this beloved niece understood and shared all her feelings. She reckoned upon that young creature, "made for great things," one day joining in her apostolic labours. It was with this view that she had trained and prepared Euphrosyne and encouraged her vocation. But there are two different ways in which our Lord makes use of His servants for great purposes, that of

action and that of immolation. Aloysia—this was the name Euphrosyne had received when she took the veil, and it is thus we shall now call her—was not to be a worker in the field of action and conquest: she was to be the victim offered up for that end, and to purchase it at the price of her holy and beautiful death.

She had scarcely made her vows when her aunt was informed that her health seemed to be failing. An abscess affected one of her feet, and all her limbs seemed to be threatened with similar ailments. Madame Duchesne saw at once how serious this state of things might prove, and she felt the blow most keenly. With the tenderness which was joined to her manly virtues she pours forth expressions of grief and affection. "Why, why," she asks, "did not you tell me of this ailment? Two days ago I still was under the happy delusion that you were quite well," but then she quickly adds: "God knows what He is doing when He sends suffering. He wants to convince you of your nothingness, to keep you in close dependence upon Him, and to make you die to yourself by a state of inaction directly contrary to your zeal and your character. Remember that He does not care for those who do not suffer; that the more you suffer, the more perfectly you are a religious. Suffering is to the soul what fire is to gold." She ends her letter with these words: "Would that I could nurse you, dear Aloysia; but as God does not will it, I pray all the more for you instead." Another time she writes to her sick niece, whom she was more afraid would despise life than fear death. "My dear Aloysia, the miseries of this life make you perhaps look upon health as of no value; but having myself an intense desire for the increase of our Society and a deep sense of the needs of all the countries where we are asked to work, I have obtained leave to make a vow to St. Francis Regis, that if he obtains your complete recovery I shall encourage your

desire to be employed in the instruction of so many neglected souls in foreign lands." Writing to Mother Thérèse Maillucheau, then Superior of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut, she kept devoting Aloysia, in case of recovery, sometimes to China and sometimes to Poland. Madame Duchesne hardly realized at that time that God could be served by any other apostolate than that of the foreign missions.

To Madame Jouve, whose anguish weighed like lead on her own heart, she tried to inspire courage, whilst she expressed the deepest sympathy in her grief. She tells her of all the prayers that are made for her child, of her own hopes that they will be answered, and then adds: "She will be more fervent than ever after this illness, and you, dear sister, will be a double debtor to the Giver of all gifts. He makes you feel at this moment that He only lends you your children, that He is their sole Master. I implore Him to strengthen you in this sad moment. I understand your sufferings, for I entirely share them."

In another letter, in which she tells Madame Jouve that she is authorized to take her daughter home in order to have the advice of the best doctors at Lyons, we find these words: "We are besieging Heaven with prayers, and especially invoking St. Francis Regis, by an express vow, for the re-establishment of Aloysia's health, which we expect will one day be employed in greatly promoting God's glory. I have great confidence that we shall be heard, and I share all your maternal anxieties." "Euphrosyne's state is terrible," she exclaims in another letter; "oh, what a poor mother's heart has to go through! I have a mother's feelings for all your children, and I intreat you to seek for consolation solely in the humble and meek Heart of Jesus, and you will find it."

To have had this dear niece near her would have been her wish, and Madame Barat's also. But they were obliged,

to her great sorrow, to give it up. "God sends us a great trial," she writes: "the more I think of it the more I feel that in our small and crowded house in Paris she would be worse off than at Grenoble. *Fiat*, then, in this and in all things else."

So much suffering was not thrown away. Madame Duchesne was experiencing its results. Her plans for the missions were gradually gaining ground, and Heaven beginning thus to repay the offering of herself which that young victim had made for the success of the work. Father Varin, shaken at last by Madame Duchesne's perseverance, did not venture any longer to oppose her departure. Finding that he had relented, she asked him to receive the vow she wished to make of consecrating herself under obedience to the instruction of the heathen. He agreed to do so, and from that instant she felt bound to refuse nothing that God asked of her for that work. Father Barat was the most eager advocate of her projects, and his impatient ardour soon found means to clench the matter. Mgr. Dubourg, that same Bishop of New Orleans whom we have seen arousing the zeal of the Lyonese, was now at Bordeaux, where many of his relatives were living. Father Barat hastened to visit the good prelate, and spoke to him not only of his own desires, but of Madame Duchesne's earnest wishes. In a letter dated November 11th, 1816, he thus relates this conversation: "On the eve of Mgr. Dubourg's departure for Provence I had a long conference with him, and we talked a great deal of you and of Louisiana. As your Superiors admit that your vocation is supernatural, as Monseigneur wishes to establish you in his immense diocese, and as you sincerely and steadily desire it also, the matter is settled! There is now nothing to be done except to fix the time of your departure and the means of going."

Things advanced at a quick pace with Father Barat.

His nature was as rough as it was ardent, but that roughness did not displease Madame Duchesne. "Now," he wrote to her, "you ought to have at least three subjects with a really good will to accompany you. But what is wanted are strong souls, and strong souls are not easily found, especially amongst women. This may seem discouraging, perhaps, but you have so long pined for your savages, that on account of that constancy it is probable enough that God will make an exception in your favour, and will not insist on your being a thoroughly strong soul."

The days which followed Madame Duchesne's reception of this letter were spent in prayer, in hope, and holy rapture. An opening at last presented itself to her increasing desires. Was it not intended that she should seize upon it at once? Would not Heaven speak at last through the lips of her Superiors? She thus describes her thoughts at that moment: "On the 3rd of December, feast of St. Francis Xavier, I heard Mass in the Church of the Missions. Those words of the Epistle, 'How shall they believe Him of Whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach unless they be sent?'* seemed to thrill through my soul. I could not restrain my tears. I did not know where to hide myself. In order to avoid this, in the afternoon I thought I would not go again to this church; but when I arrived at our house in the Rue des Postes the door was closed, and somehow or other I did return to the same church, and moreover, I could not resist kneeling down near the relics of St. Francis Xavier. The Blessed Sacrament had been brought to this chapel, and I felt a strong feeling of hope coming over me. It lasted during the whole time of the novena, which I offered up for the express purpose of obtaining a knowledge of God's will."

On the 1st of January, 1817, Madame Jouve asked her

* Romans x.

what she would like for a new year's gift. Her answer was: "What I should really like would be if you would have a Mass said for me at Nôtre Dame de Fourvières," and then in the prevision of her approaching departure she prepared her sister for it in the following manner: "Many thanks for all your good wishes for my happiness: I shall always find it in the accomplishment of God's will, so that a change of position will not distress me. When I came to Paris I did not expect or wish to stay there. Wherever I am, I shall be able to write to you and to hear from you. But as nothing is settled yet I wait to tell you later on what concerns me."

At last the will of God clearly revealed itself. A short time after that novena of prayers, on the 14th of January, 1817, Mgr. Dubourg appeared at the house of the Sacred Heart in the Rue des Postes. When he called there Madame Duchesne was portress, and it was she who went to announce his visit to Madame Barat. "Now is the hour of Providence," she said; "I do beseech of you, Reverend Mother, not to miss the opportunity. You have only a word to say. I implore you say it." "My child, the Bishop must lead the way by making a request," Madame Barat answered, "and I will then speak to him of your intentions. That will be a sign which will enable me to judge what is God's will."

During that first interview nothing was said. Mgr. Dubourg only asked if he might say Mass the next morning in the chapel of the convent. After he had made his thanksgiving, and whilst Madame Barat was sitting with him during his breakfast, the Bishop began to talk to her of America, and one of the first things he said was how glad he should be to establish in his diocese Sisters of the Sacred Heart, and he earnestly begged her to give him some of her nuns. Madame Barat felt that this time God was speaking through his lips. "When this can be

arranged," she said, "I shall have a person to give you who is ready to go," and she told him of her friend's persevering vocation. The Bishop, who had already heard of Madame Duchesne from Father Barat, seemed delighted with what she said to him, and asked if he could see this devoted missionary. Madame Duchesne was immediately sent for, and received his blessing. So great was her emotion that she could not speak. A sign that her prayers were heard was, however, given her in that hour, for, as she states herself, a pain in her side which she had suffered from for fifteen years suddenly disappeared. Strength as well as light were bestowed upon her. She withdrew full of happy confidence, and Mgr. Dubourg, who was just starting on a journey through France and Belgium, carried away with him the hope that a colony of the Sacred Heart would be sent to him.

That journey lasted several months; already in Italy and especially at Rome and Milan, he had recruited a number of priests and Lazarist clerics for his diocese. Lyons, as we have already said, had also given him missionaries, Holland and Belgium had been very favourable to this good Bishop, who was at once an apostle and a colonist, and who begged in every direction, not only for priests and religious for the benefit of souls, but also plants and instruments of labour for the cultivation of the soil. Forty new auxiliaries were about to follow him into that vast field of work.

In the meantime a variety of conflicting opinions were being discussed by those who surrounded the Mother General. Many influential men, some of whom were held by Madame Duchesne in great veneration, M. Perreau especially, the ecclesiastical Superior of the house of Paris, were afraid of the consequences of her undertaking. Madame Duchesne who always went straight to the point, wrote to him at once. She frankly explained to him the nature of her vocation, and then addressing him as a father,

asked him for advice and comfort, for these obstacles at the last hour were becoming to her a sort of martyrdom. He wrote to her in return a most kind and sensible letter: "You are right, my dear child, to look upon me as a father, for I have all the feelings of a Father in Christ towards you. As you wish for guidance and consolation which will quiet your soul, I will begin by saying that I do not at all disapprove of your desire of going to Louisiana. I am even inclined to think that it is God Who inspires it; for you do not seek any of those temporal enjoyments which sometimes delude a soul. You are looking forward only to labour and privations. But supposing, my child, that this particular vocation to carry the name of Jesus and the devotion to His Sacred Heart amongst the savages really comes from God, the important thing for you is to wait for the hour of His Providence which is also the hour of grace. You would not wish, I am sure, to commence this enterprise until God seems to open for you a way to it. And this is the important point we have to decide." And then M. Perreau went on to say that after talking over the subject with Madame Barat and Madame Bigeu, her Assistant, they had come to the conclusion that it would not be prudent at that moment to undertake the American foundation. It was most important not to weaken the infant institute by too much subdivision. This was also Father Varin's opinion. M. Perreau ended his letter with these words: "I feel, my dear child, that this decision afflicts you, delaying, as it does, the accomplishment of your pious wishes, but think of the spirit of obedience and self-sacrifice which ought to be your rule, and say to yourself, 'After all, what do I seek? What is the most ardent desire of my soul? Is it not to please God, and do His will whatever it may be? Now, the will of my Superiors shows me plainly what is His will in the matter. I shall then await with entire resignation, and

if possible with a holy indifference what they will decide as to my future fate, sure that it is the most secure way, or rather the only way that leads to God and that pleases Him.'" He added: "I do not say, however, that you ought to give up your holy projects; it is very possible that they may be realized yet, but be content for the present to make yourself more worthy of your vocation by an increasing humility and a more complete self-abnegation. Be a child in simplicity, for our Divine Lord says that those who do not become as little children cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven. Offer yourself to be guided wherever Divine Providence may call you; thus only can you please God. It is only when you give up your own will that you can be sure that you are doing His will."

This was written in May, 1817. It was about that time that Mgr. Dubourg was expected again in Paris. "A few days before his arrival," Madame Duchesne relates, "I saw him in a dream, and he told me not to be uneasy. As I had not been thinking about him, there seemed to me to be some mystery in this dream, and I expected he would call the next day, but he did not come till two or three days afterwards. On the feast of the Ascension my heart burned within me when, as I entered the choir, I heard those words, 'Go, teach all nations.' They affected, they haunted me, they filled me with a sadness sweeter than any pleasure. I thought of renewing my applications, but I said to myself, 'I have exhausted all human means;' and turning to God, I added, 'It is for Thee, my God, now to act.'"

Mgr. Dubourg arrived the following day, the 16th of May. Great was my astonishment, and great my joy when, in speaking to the novices, he told them he had been particularly struck the day before by a sentence in the office for the day, 'Go and teach all nations.' I perceived God had given us the same thoughts and a similar vocation."

The Bishop had come back to the Sacred Heart in the full belief that a colony of religious was to be sent out to him, and thinking only of settling the details as to the time and manner of their departure. He was very much annoyed to find that the Superior General was still hesitating, and quite changed. Both the Founder and the Superior of her Society were opposed to the plan of the American foundation; diffident of her own judgment, and afraid of assuming the responsibility of so great an undertaking, she made excuses to the Bishop, and begged for further delays. Up to the last moment all human influences seemed to militate against Madame Duchesne's desires.

This time again her hopes seemed crushed just as she thought them about to be realized. The Bishop, after vainly remonstrating, was going away sad and displeased. As Madame Barat accompanied him to the door, she looked anxious, and felt very much agitated. This proved the decisive moment. Mgr. Dubourg was just leaving the house, when Madame Duchesne appeared. She had followed them, and now fell on her knees before her Superior. "Your consent, Reverend Mother," she exclaimed in a supplicating manner, "do give your consent." Madame Barat stood still for an instant, raised her heart in prayer, and felt God speaking to her soul. "Well, my dear Philippine," she said, "I grant your request, and I will now try to find companions for you." The American mission was thus, as it were, carried by storm. The arrangements were all made on the spot, and it was settled that the colony should depart in the course of the spring, 1818.

Between the 6th of January, 1806, when Madame Duchesne had felt that God had spoken to her heart, and the 17th of May, 1817, when she heard the long wished-for word "Go," more than eleven years had elapsed in expectation, prayer, and supplication. This long ordeal had been required in order to test that this decision was

indeed according to the will of God. It was the more evident from the fact that whereas our Lord generally manifests his intentions by the agency of human authority, in this case He had permitted them to be constantly counteracted by considerations of human prudence. It had been something more than an ordinary vocation that had kept up Madame Duchesne's hopes and courage amidst incessant opposition. It amounted to an inspiration which at last triumphed over every obstacle. In spite of every effort to the contrary, God carried the day. She had hoped against hope, and never relaxed in her prayers. The words of the Holy Scriptures might well be applied to her: "In silence and in hope" she had found strength and the fulfilment at last of her long-delayed desire.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Madame Duchesne's leavetakings and departure from Paris. Her residence and retreat at Bordeaux. Farewell letters to her family and to Aloysia. Her embarkation.*

1818.

ONCE arrived at the point she had so long sighed for, Mother Duchesne wrote to announce the news to all those she loved.

Father Barat had already heard it from Mgr. Dubourg, who was then at Bordeaux, preparing to embark. He wrote to her in his own peculiar style: "Well, my dear Sister, at last all is settled, and you are going to work amongst the Illinois! You had set your heart on the Iroquois, but have had to descend a few hundred miles lower. You are not quite holy enough to be eaten up by the Hurons and Algonquins. Thank God, you will not yet be devoured by the savages, but you must be eaten up by the love of God and a fiery zeal for souls. Ask of God that he who writes to you may be sent also to those missions. He would be delighted to go; his Superiors know it, and if you have an opportunity you may remind them of it."

A few days afterwards, on the feast of St. Francis Regis, the same Father wrote to Madame Duchesne that the Bishop of Louisiana was to set sail on the following day. On the 27th of June, 1817, Mgr. Dubourg embarked at Bordeaux on a small ship of the royal navy which Louis XVIII. had placed at his disposal. The colony

of the Sacred Heart was to follow him in a few months. From Baltimore he wrote to Madame Duchesne: "The voyage is no doubt a trying one, but women and children make it constantly with the object of bettering their position in life, and shall we not with still greater zeal do as much for the glory of our good Master and the safety of the souls committed to His charge."

In the meantime Madame Duchesne was apprising her relatives of her approaching departure. She wrote first to Madame de Mauduit: "I have spoken of my plans to my two dear cousins, Madame de Rollin and Madame Tesseire, who are goodness itself to me, and now I must tell you about them. I have had, my dearest sister, for a very long time a special and strong attraction to instruct the heathen. I used to think of China, but this proved impossible, and God, favouring my desire, has made me find what I wished nearer than I thought, and in a less difficult manner. I have seen in Paris the Bishop of Louisiana, and it is in his diocese that I am going to work for the conversion of savages, and with some companions to found a house of our Society. We were to have embarked in May, but the departure of a set of missionaries, the convenience of securing a passage on a well known ship and with a good captain, determined us to start this month. I leave Paris on Sunday. . . . Rely upon it, dearest sister, I shall be always closely united with you, and will continually pray for you, your husband, your son, and your daughter. Tell Amélie not to relax from her first fervour, and never to forget the one thing necessary. Good-bye, kindest of sisters. Get a Mass said for me at Saint-Régis."

To Madame Jouve she wrote: "I shall leave Paris, my dearest sister, in the course of this week. Bordeaux will be my first, and Louisiana, I hope and trust, my last destination. I have made acquaintance here with the Bishop of that diocese, Mgr. Dubourg. I had long wished

to do so, and to tell him of my ardent desire to instruct the heathen, a desire which my confessors and my Superiors for a long time opposed. At last Providence has brought about the means of accomplishing it. Mgr. Dubourg was very kind to me, and we shall live in the town where he resides. . . . I shall leave France this month, but I carry away with me all my recollections of home, all my affection for my dear sisters and their children. You will pray for me, and I shall pray for you. At this moment, when I am leaving everything behind in order to work for the salvation of a few souls, I feel the most intense desire that you may cling to the one thing that is necessary. I am, and shall ever be, devotedly yours in the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

It was in a different tone that she wrote to her Sister in religion, to her niece, the self-consecrated victim Aloysia. "I am leaving Paris, dear Aloysia, and soon I shall leave France. We shall meet again at any rate in Heaven, if on earth we are not to enjoy that consolation. We shall pray for you. Offer your sufferings for us. I hear that they are increasing. Let your pains be prayers for us and our forlorn ones. I will offer for you the eloquent pleadings of the poor. Envy my happiness and enjoy your own. It is God's will we should part. He will unite us in His Sacred Heart. Farewell, dearly beloved Sister, farewell."

Aloysia wept at first when she heard of this expedition, which she had once hoped to join. For the first time she decided to ask God to give her back her health, in the hope that she might then embark, but her illness had made irreparable strides. Five deep wounds were covering nearly the whole of her body, and depriving her of the power of moving. Serious apprehensions were entertained for her life. She felt what was the post assigned to her, and accepted readily, as her aunt said, the passive but effectual part she was to take in her work, that of silent suffering.

And towards others she took care, not only to defend,

but to praise her aunt's heroic resolution, which some of her family blamed. She wrote to her mother, Madame Jouve: "Yes, indeed it is an eternal separation as to this world. My aunt makes the sacrifice most generously. She leaves all those she loves and devotes herself to a life of sufferings, poverty, and labour, and runs the risk of a journey not without dangers. . . . You will join your prayers to ours, dearest mother, that she may make a successful voyage. She enters upon it joyfully." In the same letter the details given by this devoted young nun of the terrible increase of her illness and her sharp sufferings, show what a complete holocaust she had to offer for the success of Madame Duchesne's undertaking, whom we find at that time writing: "Euphrosyne's virtue and resignation are perfect. God permits that all the efforts made for her cure should fail. May His holy will be done!"

Several nuns came forward and offered to share Madame Duchesne's apostolical labours. There was at that time in the Paris novitiate a religious called Octavie Berthold, who had become a postulant at Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut on the same day as Aloysia Jouve. Born at Geneva of Calvinist parents, she was brought up a Protestant, and remained one till she was more than twenty. Her father had been Voltaire's private secretary. But there are souls whom God seems to touch by His grace even in the midst of the most apparently unfavourable circumstances. Octavie had an intuitive inclination towards Catholicism, and once converted to the faith and received into the Church, she was immediately attracted to the Heart of Jesus and drawn upwards to the highest sphere of crucified love. She was pleasing, well informed, and a great favourite with the children of the school in Paris, but she gave up everything for the sake of embracing the Cross of Christ. What she sought in the missionary life was an entire immolation of

self. God accepted her sacrifice, and we shall see to what a heroic degree she carried it out.

Madame Duchesne's second companion was likewise a daughter of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut. Mdlle. Eugénie Audé had lived in the best society in Piedmont and Tuscany, and been presented at the Court of the Emperor Napoleon. Devoted as she was to dress, to amusements, and self-gratification, it had required a wonderful stroke of grace to detach Eugénie from the world and to make her consecrate herself to our Lord Jesus Christ. He had appeared to her one day with His adorable face bleeding and bruised, and this vision had led her first to the Sacred Heart and then to an apostolical vocation. From Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut, where she had taken the veil, this young girl went to the Paris novitiate, where she had learnt to know and love Mother Barat with an intense affection which during all her life was a source of strength and consolation, but also of suffering to her heart. She had just been sent to the new foundation at Quimper, but was recalled to Paris in order to make her vows before departing for the foreign missions where she had asked to go. Her abilities, zeal, quick intelligence and tact, enabled her to render the greatest services in the cause of education in America. She contributed the active element to the apostolate of the Society in that country, while Madame Berthold was the type of self-sacrifice. Two Lay-sisters begged to be allowed also to serve Jesus Christ in those distant countries. They were Catherine Lamarre and Marguerite Manteau. Madame Audé describes as follows the eve of their departure from the Paris house. "Our Reverend Mother Barat assembled us around her and spoke to us in an earnest and touching manner of the greatness of our vocation, and of how enviable a one it was in the light of faith. 'If you only established one new tabernacle in Louisiana," she said, 'if you made those poor savages make but one act of love

for our Lord, ought you not to consider yourselves greatly blest?' Then, with an expression of countenance and tone which showed how her whole heart and soul were moved, she exclaimed: 'Come and let us give each other a parting embrace, you who will ever be so dear to us in the Heart of Jesus.' We knelt at her feet. Mother Duchesne kissed them, and we all remained silent. What a moment that was! In the evening, during recreation, our Mothers and Sisters kept looking at us with mixed feelings of sorrow and joy. Mother Barat gave me the string of her cross and also her watch, and other things to my companions. She would have liked to bestow on us everything she possessed. I saw she was shedding tears, and they seemed to fall on my heart." Madame Duchesne was named Superior of the colony, with exceptional powers for the government of the American province.

On the following day, Sunday, the 8th of February, 1818, the Abbé Perreau, in the chapel where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, received Madame Audé's vows, and preached on the text, "My Beloved to me and I to Him." Father Varin paid her a visit on that day. She gave him the cross and ring which had been bestowed on her at her profession, wishing, she said, to receive them anew from the hands of that venerable Father, the Founder of the Society. She wrote to her Sisters at Quimper, "What shall I say of the grace I have received? It quite overcomes me, and I feel it a duty not to set any bounds to my sacrifice. Jesus, in giving me the Cross has not bestowed it as a mere outward token. His strong and gentle hand has thrust it into my heart. He makes me feel it by the pain of leaving you, my beloved Mothers and Sisters, but at the same time He makes me love it from the belief that at the foot of the Cross I shall obtain for that dear family which adopted me all the gifts of His love."

As to Madame Duchesne, the predominant feeling of

her soul was intense joy at being about at last to depart for the mission she had so long sighed for. Many of her relatives, whom she had always loved in such a Christian manner gathered around her, and gave to the little colony letters of recommendation to the French Minister and Consul in the United States.

On the day of their departure they saw Father Varin, Father Roger, Father Druilhet and other devoted priests, who gave them the most heartfelt encouragements. When, after a hasty meal the carriage was announced, Madame Duchesne rose and received a final embrace from her Superior, and also from all the members of the community. She cheered them by her parting words, and cut short the farewell scene. Octavie Berthold was crying, and could hardly tear herself away from the arms of her companions. Madame Duchesne took her hand and drew her out of the house into the carriage. A few moments afterwards they were rolling away in the diligence on the road to Bordeaux, where they were to embark.

Meanwhile Madame Duchesne had placed in the hands of the Abbé Perreau an important document which he was to give to Mother Barat as the authentic and unmistakeable proof of her vocation. It contained a detailed account of the manner in which God had dealt with her soul from childhood upwards. "I have made up my mind, Reverend Mother," she says, "to leave you this statement, for I know how anxious you must feel in committing to me the important work we are about to undertake at so great a distance from those who have imparted to us its spirit, and from you, who have acquired it in order to communicate it to your daughters. But if it is God who inspired my vocation, if it is He who opens to me the means of following it, we may hope that He will sustain His work by the means of the feeble instrumentality and the incompetent persons employed in it." After relating the whole series of

Divine favours which have been enumerated in the preceding pages, she ends with these words: "Let me, dear Reverend Mother, once more ask your forgiveness for all the trouble I have given you. God puts means of expiation within my reach by laying upon me the burthen of Superiority which you have assigned to me. My greatest happiness will be to train for you worthy daughters. Otherwise I would rather die."

The four travellers were advancing on their way. They had for companions in the diligence an officer who whiled away the time by singing drinking songs and a young ecclesiastic not yet ordained, but who was afterwards both a priest and a Jesuit. By dint of chanting psalms and hymns he managed to drown the voice of his fellow-traveller. At Orleans and at Tours the nuns went to Holy Communion. On the Wednesday of that week they arrived at the convent of Les Feuillants at Poitiers, where they were received with that tender charity which, as Madame Audé said, was in the hearts of all their Mothers and Sisters. As had been previously arranged, Marguerite Manteau here joined the missionary colony. The whole party again communicated at Angoulême, and thus strengthened on their way by the Bread of Angels, the travellers' food, they arrived at last at Bordeaux. Here they lodged in the home of a little teaching community directed by Madame Vincent, who had formerly received Madame Barat in her house, and who on this occasion most kindly and hospitably welcomed her daughters. They were to remain there until they could embark.

There is a trying hour to go through in most cases where a great sacrifice has been accomplished. Separated from the interests and occupations of the past, and not yet engaged in those they are about to undertake, people are apt to feel painfully what they have lost, and can hardly realize what is to be their future fate. This seems to have

happened to Madame Duchesne during the days that followed her arrival at Bordeaux. She wrote to Mother Barat: "The happiness I enjoy at Madame Vincent's house is unlike that of being with you or my Sisters, and though God keeps up the strength of my desires I have been since I arrived in a state of anguish, hardness, and darkness which made me exclaim when I entered the Church of St. Andrew, in the words of that Apostle, *O bona crux, diù desiderata, et jam concupiscenti animo præparata*—'O good cross, so long wished for, and which art about to fulfil all my desires.' At times, too, my Sisters have felt their hearts sink; I perceived this, and it caused me a double suffering."

In another letter she says: "The day of our departure being uncertain, as it depends on the wind, we turn to account this delay by making a retreat," and again, "I have had the happiness of finding Father Barat here; we see him every day, and he occasionally hears our confessions; your brother is famous for pushing on towards perfection souls which hang back." Madame Audé said of the same Father: "If the only grace I had obtained in this journey was that of seeing a saint, I should not regret having taken it."

Besides the encouraging letters which Madame Duchesne received from Mother Barat and Mother Bigeu, she heard also from the Abbé Perreau, who assured her that no one was more earnest or more zealous than himself in the cause of her mission. Strangely enough, even on the very eve of the final decision everybody was against it, but from the moment it was settled that she should go every one approved and applauded the undertaking. Not only Madame Barat, but all the best judging persons in the Society saw it in a new light. The Abbé Perreau wrote: "I am happy to tell you, my dear child, that your good Mother Barat was pleased with the document that you left with me to give

her. For my part, the more I think of it the more I see that God calls you where you are going, and that it was in order to stamp your holy enterprise with the mark which distinguishes all those which are undertaken for His sole glory that He permitted it to be so long opposed. Go on with the same perseverance and complete abandonment to Providence, and carry out what you have so happily begun. God will strengthen and sustain you. Indeed, you may reckon on a special Divine protection, for you can say, like the Apostle, "Lord, we have left all things to follow Thee, what, then, shall we have?" What He will give you in return for this great reliance upon Him is His Divine Heart as a refuge, His spirit to guide you, and a few drops from His chalice of suffering to purify you, to detach you from yourself, and to teach you to lean on Him alone. Oh, how sweet and how strong is His support! As long as you rest upon it you can say, *Dominus mecum et non timebo mala.* Go, then, courageously where He calls you. Everywhere you will find Him. *Domini est terra et plenitudo ejus, orbis terrarum, et universi qui habitant in eo. . . . In manibus tuis sortes meæ.* Tell your daughters that I think of you all in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Farewell—Farewell."

He added in the same letter that on account of the obstacles and opposition which many ecclesiastics had made to the projected journey he had written to explain the matter at Rome, and to ask the Holy Father's blessing for Madame Duchesne and her companions.

The delay caused by contrary winds enabled Madame Duchesne to write another last farewell to her relatives. They had been deeply affected at first at the news of her departure, but had afterwards accepted this trial in a Christian spirit. Madame Duchesne was grateful for this, and wrote to Madame de Mauduit: "Dearest sister, I knew your heart too well not to foresee that my departure would grieve you, but I also was convinced that your

courage and your faith would do justice to the motives which influence me, and that have at last overcome the opposition of my Superiors. I was sure that the resolution I have taken would not interfere with that affectionate intimacy between us which has been the delight of my life, and which now gives merit to my sacrifice. To run dangers is nothing in comparison with the interruption of a close and holy friendship. But it will not really be interrupted. It will continue to exist, and will live on privations. God, Who is always generous, will give us graces which will reward us for them. I shall always pray for you, and if God blesses our efforts, you and your family will have a great share in the work of our mission. God has long ago given me this attraction, and granted my desires after many supplications. There is so marked an indication of His Providence in this answer to prayer, that holy persons all see in it the hand of God. . . . Farewell then, dearest sister . . . our friendship is too strong to be affected by absence. I shall always love dearly my sister and her husband, his sister and her children. Remember me kindly to all of them, and ask them to pray for me. I shall always pray for you in the bountiful Heart of Jesus."

To Madame Jouve she writes in the same strain: "Dearest sister, I knew well what were your feelings towards me, and the thought of the heavy trial it would be to my dear sisters added greatly to the sacrifice I had to make for the fulfilment of God's designs. If He vouchsafes to accept and to bless our labours, I shall venture to ask Him in return for the most abundant blessings for you and for your family, which I am most tenderly attached to. Farewell, dearest of sisters; I shall never forget you."

To her nuns of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut she addressed heart-stirring words of farewell. "Dearest friends and children, at the moment when I am leaving all things,

almost as really as if I were dying, for it is next to certain that I shall not see you again on earth, any more than so many other Mothers, Sisters, relatives, and friends, I feel as if I could venture to ask great things from God with that trust which made St. Peter say, "Behold we have left all things and followed Thee, what then shall we have?' Oh, the reward which I implore Him to grant me is the inexpressible consolation of hearing that you are all fervent in His love, that you do good works, and thus advance in that solid piety the end of which is the enjoyment of God in this world by His grace, and in the next by His glory. Yes, across the vast ocean which is about to separate us, my heart will seek you, and sigh for your happiness. If I can contribute to it by getting those who will form the flock of Christ in America to pray for you, I shall not omit what will be much after my heart. When I am surrounded by simple and innocent souls, I shall say, 'Let us pray for those children whom I have left behind, and the thought of whom gave so much value to my sacrifice. Let us pray for those first benefactresses of yours who, without knowing you, wearied Heaven with prayers for your conversion, and contributed to it by the gifts they prepared for you.' And you, too, my children, pray a great deal for us."

To Mother Theresa, Madame Duchesne spoke in a still higher tone of ardent self-devotion and overflowing zeal for souls. She had been her companion on the holy mountain: they had striven to surpass each other in fervour, and we feel when we read her letters to her that they are written by a thorough religious, by a true Spouse of Jesus Christ: "Oh, how I long," she exclaims, "to go on board that ship which is to carry me to the object of my hopes. But the ties which bind me to the beloved ones I leave in France, and to the Society, will become even stronger and closer when I shall have the consolation

of working to extend the latter in the new world, and of seeing the devotion to the Sacred Heart flourishing there." Mother Theresa had written that she envied her happiness, and would be glad to take part in it. Madame Duchesne answers: "As to the prospect of our ever seeing you again, I have little hope of it. You are doing good in France, and if Aloysia is meant to work elsewhere, you will have to part with her. Perhaps God is waiting for that moment of trial to restore her strength, to employ her for His greater glory, and by other conquests of souls to make up to you for the loss of one who has indeed been one of your chief acquisitions."

Evidently Madame Duchesne did not give up all expectation of seeing her dear suffering niece a missionary. She wrote to her from Bordeaux: "My dearest Sister and friend, God, Who sees the extent of your wishes, thinks fit at present to repress them, in order to purify you. You desire nothing but what He wills, and you will soon know what it is He wills. If He chooses that you should live in suffering and humiliation, we can but bless Him for it. If He restores your health, then we will bless Him and love Him for His Divine mercy towards you; but do not forget those words of M. de Montfort to the first religious of the *Filles de la Sagesse:* Since the days of Abraham to those of Jesus Christ, and since the days of Jesus Christ to the present time, when God has willed to call a soul to a high degree of perfection, He has withdrawn it from its country, He has detached it from everything, even from the holy sweetness of spiritual friendships. Nothing is necessary to our perfection and our happiness but God alone. The more you are devoted to your Divine Spouse, the more you will relish this teaching. He must engross all your affection. Farewell.—Ever yours."

And then, at the moment of setting sail, with one foot, so to speak, in the ship which was to carry her away from

her native land, Madame Duchesne again wrote to her niece: "I should be sorry, dear Aloysia, to leave France without writing to you a few last lines. It is very painful for me to part from you when you are so ill, but it is only another addition to the sacrifice we have to make. Your sufferings will do more for our mission than our words and efforts. God has His secret views. It would have been too delightful for me to have you with me. God, in His Divine jealousy, often ordains these separations. . . . I sometimes think that He will raise you up from this state of infirmity, and then employ you to the utmost. Do not set any limits to the offering you make of yourself, not even if you had to come to America without any hope of our ever meeting, but with the consolation of being all the more generously devoted to God. Farewell, dear Sister. Think of my happiness, envy it if you like, but do not wish to take it away from me. We are expecting every moment to sail. Farewell once more in the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

On their first arrival at Bordeaux, Madame Duchesne and her daughters had paid their respects to the holy Archbishop Mgr. d'Aviau, who congratulated them on their departure from a country where impiety was gaining ground, with the object of working amongst those who had never turned their backs on grace. M. l'Abbé Boyer, the Archbishop's Vicar-General, was struck with the expression of countenance of the missionary nuns, and said: "I can find nothing in these souls but a deep peace." "And a great joy," added Madame Duchesne. A few days afterwards, the Archbishop invited them all to assist at the Mass he said for them in his private chapel. "I trust," Madame Duchesne wrote, "that as so many saints are praying for us we shall obtain the grace of becoming saints ourselves some day. This is the only reward I look to for so many separations, which God alone can make up for." And in another

letter she says: "I ought to be a saint, seeing how many saints I know."

On the 13th of March, the eve of their departure, Father Barat addressed an exhortation to the colony, which strengthened their desire to suffer anything for Jesus Christ. On the following morning, the five religious again heard Mass in Mgr. d'Aviau's chapel, and received from him Holy Communion. Then after repeated blessings they left. M. Dubourg, brother of the Bishop of Louisiana, and his sister, Madame Fournier, who had assisted them in all their preparations, accompanied Madame Duchesne and her companions to the place of embarkation. They got into a boat, which took them down the Garonne to Royan, where they found the ship they were to sail in. It was on Holy Thursday, 1806, that during a long watch before the Blessed Sacrament, Madame Duchesne had first received the intimation of the mission God had appointed to her. And it was also on a Holy Thursday and the feast of St. Joseph, 1818, that she and her Sisters ascended the deck of the sailing vessel, the *Rebecca*, under the command of Captain Tourneur. M. l'Abbé Martial, Vicar-General of Mgr. Dubourg and M. Evremont-Hulissard, who had travelled in the same diligence with them from Paris to Bordeaux were also amongst the passengers. On Holy Saturday the *Rebecca* sailed out of port. The Sisters gave their letters to the coast pilot, and on Easter Day Madame Duchesne lost sight of her native land, which she was never to see again.

MAP OF THE
UNITED STATES,
to illustrate the Life
of
MADAME DUCHESNE.
BRITISH AMERICA
UNITED STATES
MEXICO
PACIFIC OCEAN
ATLANTIC OCEAN
GULF OF MEXICO
WASHINGTON
OREGON
CALIFORNIA
IDAHO
NEVADA
UTAH
ARIZONA
MONTANA
WYOMING
COLORADO
NEW MEXICO
DAKOTAH
NEBRASKA
KANSAS
INDIAN TERRITORY
TEXAS
MINNESOTA
IOWA
MISSOURI
ILLINOIS
WISCONSIN
MICHIGAN
INDIANA
OHIO
KENTUCKY
TENNESSEE
MISSISSIPPI
LOUISIANA
ARKANSAS
ALABAMA
GEORGIA
FLORIDA
SOUTH CAROLINA
NORTH CAROLINA
VIRGINIA
PENNSYLVANIA
NEW YORK
MAINE
VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
CONNECTICUT
NEW JERSEY
DELAWARE
MARYLAND
CANADA
NEW BRUNSWICK
Missouri R.
Mississippi R.
R. Arkansas
R. Colorado
R. Grande del Norte
Rocky Mountains
Sioux
Chippeways
LAKE SUPERIOR
LAKE MICHIGAN
LAKE HURON
LAKE ERIE
Quebec
Montreal
Toronto
Niagara
Boston
Providence
Halifax
St. Johns
Detroit
Sandwich
Chicago
Milwaukie
Dubuque
Prairie du Chien
La Salle
Iowa City
Fillmore City
Virginia City
St Francisco
Los Angelos
Denver
St. Joseph
St Mary's mission
Jefferson City
St Charles
Alton
St Louis
Florissant
Sugar Creek
Les Barreaux
Cincinnati
Louisville
Frankfort
Lexington
Baardstown
Richmond
Norfolk
Nashville
Raleigh
Jackson
Natchez
Natchitoches
Opelousas
Baton Rouge
St Genevieve
New Orleans
Havana
CUBA
JAMAICA
YUCATAN
Mexico
Puebla
West Indies

## CHAPTER IX.

*Madame Duchesne's voyage across the Atlantic. Her stay at New Orleans. Her journey up the Mississippi to St. Louis.*

1818.

It was on the morning of Easter Day that Madame Duchesne opened her eyes on the wide expanse of waves which were bearing her to the land she had so long sighed for. It seemed like a new life, and as if, after so much suffering, the day of resurrection had really dawned upon her.

On the following day the wind was contrary, and for a whole week the unfortunate prisoners were tossed to and fro in the Bay of Biscay. After this trying delay the weather changed, and the ship advanced at the rate of ten knots an hour till it reached the waters of the Azores, when the weather again became stormy. Madame Audé wrote in her journal: "The captain is out of spirits, and it was proposed at dinner to cast lots in order to find out which of the passengers was drawing down upon the vessel the wrath of Heaven. This vexed us, because people at Bordeaux had assured the captain that if priests and nuns sailed in his vessel it would certainly be wrecked.

"On the 21st of April, just as the weather had begun to improve, we encountered an American corsair, manned by a hundred and twenty sailors and armed with eleven cannons. It was on the look out for Spanish ships, the United States being at that time at war with that country.

Two of the officers came on board our vessel and visited our captain, who fortunately happened to be an American. Had it not been for this providential circumstance, for which we could not be grateful enough, the least risk we ran was that of the loss of all our goods.

"By the 24th of April the smell in the hold of the ship became very offensive. Some of the barrels had burst, and the wine, mixed with the stagnant water, produced such a stench that all the plate and copper, and even the woodwork and the crockery, were affected by it. At night the smell was intolerable, the heat continually increasing, the biscuit spoilt, and the drinking water in a state of decomposition, such as it was, it had to be sparingly used.

"In the first days of May the ship was driven by stress of weather five times backwards and forwards across the tropics. On the 10th, the feast of Pentecost, there was a fearful storm of wind and rain. All the sails had to be lowered, and the vessel was suffered to drift. We had often during our voyage the pain of seeing our poor ship in this condition. It is easy to imagine what was the sad state of the passengers at these moments."

In the midst of these days of alternate anguish and hope, the nuns were still able to enjoy the sight of the wonderful works of God in the marvellous variety which the ocean presents. Tribes of porpoises and of flying-fish surrounded the vessel, and myriads of polypus were spread over the sea like living flowers. The sharks which followed in their track, the phosphoric splendour which gilded the waves, the magnificence of the tropical skies, afforded them by day and by night constant subjects of meditation.

The Abbé Martial said Mass and gave them Holy Communion whenever the weather and a respite from sea sickness allowed of it. This good priest had tried to give them every evening on deck a little exhortation *sotto voce;* but he was obliged to give it up, feeling afraid of provoking

unbecoming remarks on the part of the crew. Confession and Communion became more and more difficult. They made up for it by prayer. During the days before the feast of Pentecost, a novena to the Holy Ghost was made and the month of Mary entirely consecrated to devout exercises. A secular lady joined the religious in their devotions, and was almost always with them. Madame Audé's journal mentions also three poor workmen, one of them from Geneva, whom want had driven from their homes, and who hoped to earn a livelihood in New Orleans. All these passengers in very different ways looked on America as a land of promise.

On the 16th of May, between the furthest point of Cuba and the sandbank of Bahama, they met several ships on their way to Europe. One of them took charge of a letter from Madame Duchesne to Mother Barat. It was on the same day of the preceding year that she had spoken for the first time to Mgr. Dubourg, and obtained leave to follow him.

The time which had elapsed since that promise and its accomplishment seemed nothing to her now, and in her gratitude she wrote: "I could never have imagined that the anniversary of that day would see me almost arrived at the end of my journey." She gives in the same letter a striking description of a sea voyage. "I see now that those who travel as we are doing only relate the pleasant side of such a journey. But as I am bound to tell you the whole truth, I shall not conceal from you the dangers of the sea nor my own weakness. A tempestuous ocean is really a terrible sight. The noise of the waves together with the roaring of the wind is louder than thunder or than a powerful cannonade. And to that appalling sound we must add that of the creaking of the vessel when the tempest is raging. There is also something mournful in the cries with which the sailors encourage themselves to work; but their silence,

and that of the captain as he walks up and down, looking anxious, is still more awful. The violent agitation of the ship during a storm makes one think of the Day of Judgment. The sky seems to disappear behind mountains of water and to carry away the stars. The waves look black, and are incessantly opening and closing over unfathomable abysses; they dash over the deck and roll away with astounding impetuosity. Twice they broke our small windows at night and drenched our beds. The creaking masts, the sails hastily folded or torn to pieces, the helm abandoned in order to ease the ship—all this is not pleasant for those who do not see God in the storm."

In the midst of these grand but terrific sights religious thoughts were always uppermost in Madame Duchesne's mind. The only thing she complains of is the loss of Mass and Communion, even on Easter Day, and she laments that sea-sickness interfered with her devotion. "Sea-sickness," she says, "is a real evil. It affects the head as well as the stomach, and makes one good for nothing. It is impossible to fix one's thoughts. I could only make short ejaculations and prayers without feeling. '*Ita Pater*,' and 'My God, I have left all for Thee,' was all I could utter."

But still in the midst of her sufferings and prostration she kept up the spirits of her companions, especially those of poor sister Catherine, who was quite bewildered, and said that she had not thought they were going so far. When the weather was bad the poor thing could not distinguish day from night. As soon as it was fine again she thought it would be all right when they landed, and that she did not at all wish to go back. Sister Marguerite had a beautiful voice, and used to sing the *Ave Maris Stella* in a way which charmed and comforted every one. This hymn was supposed to have the power of obtaining fine weather, and when a storm seemed to be coming on the captain used to say to the nuns, "Come, ladies, sing your

beautiful evening song which always brings a favourable wind."

Madame Duchesne's letter from Cuba spoke of their voyage as drawing to an end. "What are a hundred and eighty leagues," she said, "compared to two thousand two hundred, which, through good and bad weather, we have travelled ever since we left Bordeaux."

The rest of the journey was happily performed. A new passenger, called Martinez, who came from Havannah, having found out that the five nuns of the Sacred Heart were going to America to furnish religious instruction to that country, made them a present of forty piastres, about two hundred francs, and advised them if they could not establish themselves in Louisiana to come to Cuba. This little alms remained as it were in God's keeping for forty years, and ended by procuring for Cuba the house of the Sacred Heart which now exists in that island.

At last on the 25th of May the *Rebecca* entered the muddy waters of the Mississippi, the colour of which differs so much from that of the ocean that at a great distance from land it can be discerned. The ship guided by a pilot slowly advanced amidst the shoals towards a flat and low strip of coast upon which grew a number of tall poplars, while behind them wide prairies intersected by marshes and thick woods were to be seen. On Friday the 29th it touched the shore, and by a singular, and as the nuns considered it, a providential circumstance, this was the feast of the Sacred Heart. All the delays on the way had tended to bring about the joy of this arrival on that happy day. M. l'Abbé, impressed with this circumstance, preached a short discourse, and the five nuns renewed their vows. New Orleans was only six leagues further. They were all longing to travel there by land, and could not believe that our Lord would deny them anything on that blessed day.

The sun was declining, however, and they were making

up their minds to spend another night in the ship, when two carriages appeared on the bank of the river, sent to meet the Abbé Martial and the nuns who accompanied him. Two priests had come from the city to welcome them, and a short time afterwards the travellers, leaving the *Rebecca* to ascend slowly the river, went on shore at the spot where the carriages and horses were waiting for them.

Madame Audé thus describes their landing: "When we set foot on that shore which, in the light of faith and Divine Providence is really for us a promised land, we were deeply moved. Mother Duchesne's heart could not contain its overflowing gratitude and joy. In spite of the damp she could not resist kneeling down on the ground and kissing it with joyful tears. 'No one is looking at us,' she said, 'kiss it too.' You would have rejoiced to see her. Her countenance expressed all the feelings that can fill a heart overflowing with gratitude to our Lord, and consumed with the desire to promote His glory."

She then goes on to describe their drive: "At nine o'clock in the evening we got into the carriages, blessing the Heart of Jesus, and devoting to Him our hearts anew. The night was beautiful, the sky clear and starry. We drove alongside the river in which thousands of stars were reflected in the still and peaceful waters. The road was lined with bushes sparkling with a multitude of fire-flies, which throw out light just like our glowworms, and produce the effect of a beautiful illumination. Here and there we saw pretty houses, and stopped at one of them to buy some bread. It was seventy days since we had eaten any. Everything tended to raise our souls to God. Oh! if they could be directed to Him constantly with a practical desire to promote His glory we should indeed be happy!"

On the following day, the 30th of May, Madame Duchesne and her Sisters took up their abode in the house

of the Ursulines, where Mgr. Dubourg had arranged that they should be received.

Everything that the most generous and delicate charity could effect was lavished upon them in that convent. The Superior, Madame Gensoul, in religion Mother St. Michel, was a Frenchwoman; it was Pius VII. whilst he was in prison at Savona who had decided her vocation for America. Her religious home had been founded almost at the same time as the city itself by the French authorities under Louis XV. The poor nuns had gone through a hard time amidst the marshes and uncultivated lands around the Mississippi. But now they were in a prosperous condition, and educated almost all the young girls in lower Louisiana. More than three hundred of various ranks received a Christian education in that house. And what especially delighted Madame Duchesne, she found there a number of little negresses, which seemed to give her a foretaste of the work she was bent upon.

Her heart was full of desires overrunning even the wide Continent of America; not only did her zeal forestall what was to be the progress of civilization in that land so full of promise for the future, but it went far beyond it, and on the 4th of June she was writing as follows to Father Varin. "The physician of this house tells us that New Orleans will soon be a second Bordeaux. He thinks that the whole of Louisiana will be converted into another France as to fertility, commerce, and civilization. The idea of such results in a short space of time fills me with thoughts which follow the direction of my heart. They travel to the north-western coast of America, and then beyond the South Sea into Japan and Corea, with the vision of martyrdom. In this world, dear Father, there are no bounds to ambition, but I assure you that mine would end at that point, and that after martyrdom I should have nothing more to desire."

When the *Rebecca* arrived at New Orleans the French nuns went on board to take away their luggage. They met with a sort of ovation. "The captain told us," Madame Duchesne wrote, "that he had never been so well pleased with any passengers. In order to measure my expressions I did not say that I would never forget him, but that I would always remember the *Rebecca*, and he seemed pleased with the compliment."

The Abbé Martial, who had been able to estimate the generous courage of these servants of God, wrote at that time to Madame Barat: "Monseigneur and you have found means to humble me by committing to my direction, during more than two months, persons whose virtues I have often silently admired. . . . At any rate you have afforded me an opportunity of renewing my own interior life by the daily observation of the lives of your Sisters. Not one of them ever failed to evince that spirit. The passengers, the crew, everybody remarked and admired it."

The little colony had reached the desired haven, and hitherto their campaign seemed to begin under favourable auspices, but it was not long before the trials which always attend every great and holy enterprise, arose with threatening aspect.

A few days after her arrival at New Orleans, Madame Duchesne found herself covered with livid spots and swellings the nature of which she did not understand. She immediately felt that there was something serious in this ailment, and she looked upon her own position without fear or emotion. She relates herself what she felt on this occasion. "The physician of the convent told me with a very gloomy countenance that I had got the scurvy, and asked questions which implied that he was greatly surprised that I had escaped the observation of the officers of the Board of Health when they visited the ship. I was not at all agitated but rather pre-occupied, for I thought that

this was a sign that God required nothing more of me. My feeling was that Eugénie would steer the ship, and that it would gain by the change. I had been more fortunate than Moses, for I was allowed to enter the promised land, and had brought to it the colony which was to do battle for the Sacred Heart. I assure you that the thought of dying was very pleasing to me, for I have every reason to fear that if I live I shall spoil the work of our foundation." She adds: "But God gave me only a glimpse of that blessedness. After a few days treatment I recovered." This rapid improvement she ascribed to the devoted and skilful care of the Ursuline nuns. In a letter to Madame de Mauduit, she says: "The house where we have been received is for us like one of our own convents. No where could we have met with more affectionate care and devoted attention. These kind nuns provided us with medical attendance, baths, refreshing drinks, excellent food, every sort of linen. Mothers could not have done more for their children, and they speak of giving us a great many things when we leave them."

Whilst she was waiting for a letter from Mgr. Dubourg, which was to determine her destination, Madame Duchesne employed herself in collecting information on the state of the country, and it must be confessed that at the first glance there was matter for despondency, if those who work for God can ever despond. There were only two priests at New Orleans, a city containing a population of fifteen thousand souls, including both freemen and slaves. And on the other hand, the needs and misery were appalling. Immorality amongst the white portion of the inhabitants had grown almost into a public institution. The blacks were brutally profligate. Amongst the children there was nothing but pride, ignorance, and coarseness. This was very different from the idea she had formed of primitive families, simple, innocent, and pure. "There ought to be a number

of new schools, and especially houses of education in this country. Girls of eighteen seem to have learnt nothing but to eat and run about, even those belonging to wealthy families. Many of them have never learnt to pray, to kneel down, or to make the sign of the Cross. Even the most elementary religious truths are unknown to them." In another letter she says: "We feel all the more strongly the sacrifices we have made from the fact that the reward we look for is still concealed under the veils of faith and hope. But in the midst of its troubles the soul can earnestly say: '*Deus meus, lætus tibi obtuli omnia*'—'My God, with joy I have offered Thee all.'" One great consolation she speaks of, though a holy envy was mingled with her joy. "Alas! we shall not have the glory of being the first to carry into the United States the devotion to the Sacred Heart, I have found here a beautiful picture of that Divine Heart painted at Rome, and I have met with a book published in New Orleans full of prayers in Its honour." Happy as she was to see the Heart of her Lord thus honoured in that strange land, Madame Duchesne felt a little of the disappointment of a soldier who finds the flag which he had hoped to plant, already floating on the breach.

What also rejoiced the heart of Madame Duchesne was to see every evening the blacks and mulattoes assembled round the Abbé Martial and learning the Catechism. She says in her journal: "They listen to the missionary with the fervour of the early Christians gathering round St. Peter, and when the signal gun obliges them to withdraw, they complain of not being allowed to remain all night engaged in these pious exercises." In her longing impatience to do something for these poor people, Madame Duchesne gathered together some of the savages and their wives, gave them alms, and bought some of the little fancy articles they made to send to France. These Indians were, in all

probability, the last remnant of the tribe of Chactas, who inhabited a village on the other side of the lake Pont-Chartrain. She said that it was painful to see the sad and miserable expression of countenance of these poor natives. They call us "the women of the Great Spirit." This name seemed an appeal, and it roused her zeal to the utmost. "It excites my jealousy," she wrote, "to see M. Martial over head and ears in business from the moment of his arrival, whilst we remain in inactivity." What she called inactivity was the state of suspense in which she was kept in the absence of any directions from Mgr. Dubourg.

This was not the fault of the missionary Bishop. As soon as he heard of the arrival of the *Rebecca* at New Orleans he hastened to write the following letter to Madame Duchesne: "I bless God for your arrival and that of your Sisters and your venerable guide. It has been a great consolation and relief to me. You say that you have come in quest of crosses. You have indeed hit upon the right place for that purpose. You may rely upon it, you will not have long to wait for them. If I did not feel certain that such was your spirit, I should be more alarmed than pleased at your arrival. But as it is I fear nothing, God will be with us. Only strengthen yourselves more and more in this spirit. That is the important point. Foundations are always very hard at first. Remember St. Teresa . . . or rather think of the Author and Finisher of our faith."

In this letter the Bishop told the Sisters where they were to go, but it miscarried and for six months they did not receive it. Madame Duchesne was very anxious and could not conceive the meaning of this silence. She did not know what steps to take, and wrote to her Superior General. "The Bishop does not write, which is not consoling. We are always expecting the boat from St. Louis,

but I am afraid we shall have to stay here a long time still."

The Ursuline nuns pressed them to remain at New Orleans, and to establish a school of the same sort as their own. They evinced an admirable spirit of disinterestedness and generosity. "But to these proposals," Madame Duchesne wrote, "we replied that our mission was to St. Louis, and our vocation to work amongst the savages. We do not think at all now of New Orleans, and we see in this the will of God." She pointed out, however, to the Mother General, and with reason, that it would be very useful to have an establishment in that city or its neighbourhood. "I hope, my dearest Mother," she said, "that you will not object that we have too few subjects. As nothing progresses in France, we ought to work elsewhere and satisfy the numerous wishes formed in this country. I am personally so happy to have been sent here, that I should be only too glad to make further sacrifices in order to extend our sphere of action. Had we to encounter again the horrors of the sea or to cross uninhabited forests, I think I should be quite ready."

Having heard in an indirect manner that Mgr. Dubourg was expecting her at St. Louis, Madame Duchesne made up her mind to set off for that place. "Four hundred leagues," she wrote, "seem very little when one has travelled thousands, and to ascend a quiet river is only a pleasure after seeing the ocean and its storms."

The Ursuline nuns did not allow those whom they now looked upon as their sisters to depart without offering them a token of affection. They made them a free gift of the sum of fifteen hundred francs. Having taken a grateful leave of their generous friends, the five religious embarked on the steamer *Franklin* which was to convey them to St. Louis.

The Mississippi is the principal river of North America,

and navigable for the length of eight hundred leagues. The large number of tributary rivers which swell its stream connect it with the north and north-western part of the United States. The Ohio conveys to it the produce of the western States. It penetrates into Canada by means of the Illinois, and the Missouri opens to it a communication with the countries bordering on the Pacific. At the time we are speaking of, the navigation of this gigantic river was still full of difficulties, owing to the banks of sand which often choked up its bed. Now the railways convey passengers in thirty-six hours from New Orleans to St. Louis, a distance of thirteen hundred miles. Formerly it took four months to perform the same journey. Madame Duchesne heard indeed that a new invention, that of a steamboat would shorten the time. "We shall travel four or five hundred leagues," she wrote, "in steamboats, an admirable invention which enables people to accomplish in twenty days what used to be two years ago a business of six months." But in spite of this improvement, which was still in its infancy, there was no end to the delays, the stoppages, and the adventures of this journey up the stream. Her Journal describes it thus: In a narrow room where seventeen persons were closely packed, the nuns prayed, meditated, and studied the English language, whilst the steam wheels made their way up the great ocean-like river, the banks of which were pretty at times, but often dismal in the extreme. Every day almost some accident or other occurred. Sometimes the boat was stopped and came into dangerous collision with an invisible mass of trunks of trees detached from the moving banks of the river and pushed forward by the force of the stream, or it was thrown on a sand bank, from which it took nineteen hours to be disengaged. Another time the supply of fuel fell short and the steamer came to a dead stop. Then every one went on shore and picked up wood in the

primeval forest. It was a long business to cut, to carry, and to stack in on board; and meanwhile some of the passengers whiled away the time by shooting wild turkeys, a valuable addition to the decreasing store of provisions. Bread failed also, and had to be supplied for by pounding the ears of maize into flour. The immense sheet of water in the broad sunshine or the clear moonlight, lined on both sides by the dark foliage of the forests, presented a most striking scene of peaceful beauty. An exuberant and magnificent vegetation displayed on the shores of the great river an incredibly rich variety of trees and shrubs, still in a great measure unexplored. The nuns learnt the names of the Magnolia, the sugar-maple, the cotton-tree, the catalpa, and a thousand plants and flowers then unknown in the old world. They passed by the little town of Natchez, where the Jesuits had once a flourishing congregation, and saw the miserable Indians indulging in whiskey, and wearing birds in their hair as trophies of their hunting exploits. The wives of the chiefs came also on horseback to the river side dressed in red with their hair hanging about their ears, and white hats with silver spangles. At another place they met a troop of Anabaptists, wearing skins of animals, living on fruit and dwelling in the woods.

Onward they went, and the Journal records their arrival at New Madrid and then at New Bourbon, poor villages consisting of a dozen cabins. It notices the confluence of the Ohio with the Mississippi, their entrance into Kentucky, the Cape Girardeau, the little river and village of Kas-Kas-Kias, Sainte Geneviève and Herculanum. A Catholic priest of the parish of the Ascension embarked at that place for St. Louis, the nuns were delighted to find that he was the celebrated M. Gabriel Richard, a native of Saintes, who had been elected that year a member of the American Congress. He taught the savage tribes of the Illinois and Michigan the truths which Bossuet, his great-uncle on the

mother's side, had preached at the court of the great king. It was a pleasure to the nuns to watch his humility and recollection, and to see him go on shore in order to baptize a number of grown-up persons who flocked to meet him.

Now and then they hailed the sight of wooden churches built at different places on the shore, and adored Him whom they now so seldom could receive in their hearts. At Kas-Kas-Kias, where they stopped to freight the boat, the curé, M. Olivier, of Nantes, invited them to the presbytery, which they thus describe : "A real abode of poverty, where nothing was to be seen but two ricketty chairs, a worn out table, a mattress on a few planks, a pitcher, and a mug." The church was close at hand, and there the Journal says, "We had the consolation of our Lord's presence. During five weeks we had been deprived of that happiness, and this made us feel deeply that one hour in His house is worth a thousand spent in the world." During all the time of their journey they had been without Mass, confession, or Communion, even on St. Ignatius' day and the feast of the Assumption. The *Ita Pater* had been their only consolation.

Their boat, the *Franklin*, was full all the time of drunken men and disorderly women, the sight of whom, as well as their habits and kind of conversation, had been a constant suffering to the poor nuns, and a worse torment than the bites of the mosquitoes. There was only one person on board who seemed to understand what they suffered, and to feel for them, though she did not understand their language. This was a Protestant lady, whose delicacy of thought and Catholic inclinations they had instinctively discerned. She was taking her little girl of six months old to be secretly baptized in the true Church.

At last, after a journey of forty-two days, on the 21st of August, 1818, the steamer arrived at St. Louis. Madame Duchesne wrote to the Mother General that before leaving

the boat and entering the place which they were going to inhabit, she read over again the passage in Deuteronomy which had made so much impression upon her at Sainte Marie, and specially noticed the following sentences: "Hear, O Israel: Thou shalt go over the Jordan this day. . . . Say not in thy heart, For my justice hath the Lord brought me in to possess this land. . . . Take heed and beware, lest at any time thou forget the Lord thy God and neglect His commandments and judgments and ceremonies which I command thee this day."* "Such," she added, "is the resolution we all make. May God bless and confirm it."

* Deut. ix.

## CHAPTER X.

*Saint Louis of Missouri. State of Catholicism in Louisiana. The Nuns of the Sacred Heart are sent to St. Charles.*

1818.

Few cities in America stand in a finer position than St. Louis. Built on a rocky ridge above the Mississippi, it towers over the right bank of the river, a few leagues below the point where the Missouri joins the "father of the waters," as the natives call the Mississippi. It stands in the centre of a radius of nine hundred miles at an equal distance from the extremity of the great lakes, of the Mexican Gulf, of the shores of the Atlantic, and the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and commands an immense valley, bounded in the distance by rising hills covered with woods. From the neighbouring heights the view is magnificent. Before and behind the town the eye rests on verdant plains divided by a broad, straight, and silvery expanse, apparently as still as a lake, but which carries to the ocean one of the most considerable masses of water on the face of the globe.

It was France that first colonised the valley of the Mississippi; after having laid the foundations of New Orleans at the mouth of the great river, it established, in 1764, at five miles below its junction with the Missouri, a commercial station, which was called after the greatest of French kings, Saint Louis. The early days of the small colony established there were arduous. It was at first only the head-quarters of bold adventurers who travelled into the forests and the prairies to make bargains with the

Indians and hunt the bisons and the beavers. They brought back the furs collected in these expeditions to the little establishment which was the centre of trade in that region. Religion took up a leading position in this wild spot. Its first inhabitants had hallowed the virgin soil by erecting an altar. Father Meurgu, a missionary priest, began by saying Mass and baptizing under the shelter of a common tent, which had been replaced in 1770 by a little church built with logwood. Nothing in the little town of those days seemed to indicate its future development into a great city.

When Madame Duchesne arrived in St. Louis the number of its inhabitants did not exceed six thousand, but it had even then entered on a period of progressive extension which was to make of it and Chicago the two principal cities of the west. In 1803 the First Consul had sold it with the rest of Louisiana to the United States of America. Sixty millions of francs had purchased this vast French province, the limits of which were not defined. It extended beyond the valley of the Mississippi into Oregon and on to the shores of the Pacific. Then began the clearing of those alluvial plains, but with very imperfect means. It was only with the help of the axe and of fire that the pioneer made his way through the primeval forests and amongst the entangled vegetation of the endless prairies. Then came the time to dig, to plough, and to sow, and it was partly, as we have already said, to fetch new and improved instruments of labour that Mgr. Dubourg had made his journey to Europe. By degrees the limits of the desert were thrown back, the Indians retreated into wilder districts, and the nameless territory assumed the rank of a State. It was estimated that the advance of colonisation was at the rate of fifteen miles a year. The invention of steam accelerated its progress. Before her death Madame Duchesne saw the colonists planting their tents far beyond the Missouri at the furthest point of the chain of lakes and

St. Louis, a city of a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. Now its population amounts to more than four hundred thousand souls.

Emigration kept continually feeding this increasing civilisation. Liberal institutions and protecting laws, territorial concessions and immunities, attracted to the new world all the ambitious or disappointed individuals who, having met with reverses or failed to make their fortunes in the old world, eagerly turned to the new. But until the year 1819 this emigration had been comparatively slow. It was only then that it received a prodigious impulse. Since the war of Independence up to that date about two hundred and fifty thousand emigrants had settled in the States, but from October, 1819, up to the end of December, 1870, the official reports attest that more than seven million five hundred and fifty thousand strangers landed in their ports.

Madame Duchesne thus arrived in time to witness and to co-operate herself in this great movement, for Catholicism was also engaged in a work of colonisation of a higher order, and was establishing in the midst of this vast continent what the Gospel calls the Kingdom of Christ. In speaking of so immense a country, and one so complicated in its aspect as the United States of America, it is requisite to bear in mind the peculiarities of its component parts, differing as they do as to their origin, their faith, and their political history. Three different zones can be distinguished within its limits, which form so many receptacles where the current of Christian doctrine flows with more or less purity and abundance.

The first consists of regions which since their discovery have been under the dominion of Protestant powers. It contains what is called New England, and comprises the States of Boston, New York, New Jersey, Pensylvania, Delaware, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennesee, Maryland, Virginia, Georgia, the Carolinas, and the greater part of Alabama.

The second division embraces the whole of Upper and Lower Louisiana, and besides that province, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, part of Michigan, of Alabama, and Mississippi. Spain and France had successively reigned over this vast territory. It had received from these, its first masters, the faith of the Roman Catholic Church, and was still in a certain measure in possession of this its inheritance, but the scarcity of priests and the active proselytism of Protestant sects were threatening it more and more.

We will not speak now of the third zone, comprising the immense solitudes which extend to the west of Missouri from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. A remnant of scattered Indians wandered in those deserts, visited at long intervals by stray missionaries. We shall see later on that Madame Duchesne's apostolic zeal never ceased to tend in that direction.

In New England, which had been originally peopled by the exiled English Puritans, the Pilgrim Fathers, as they were called, as well as by Quakers and Presbyterians, Catholicism had been subjected to the persecuting laws of the mother country. In Maryland, the descendants of the Catholic Lord Baltimore's first companions had been compelled to submit to Protestant tyranny or to apostatize. The few priests scattered about New England, not more than twenty to twenty-five in number, were nominally subjected to the Vicar-Apostolic in London, but the difficulty of communication, the unavoidable ignorance on his part of the needs of the colony and his inability to meet them even had he understood them, rendered his government, paralysed as it was by the persecution at home, almost powerless.

From the moment of the separation between England and America, by the emancipation of the United States, a new era of religious liberty began, and at the time we are

speaking of it was complete. At the moment when revolutionary France was flying in the face of the Church by its Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the first Catholic Bishop of the United States, Dr. John Carroll, was taking possession of his see at Baltimore, by desire of the Congress and in virtue of a Bull of Pope Pius VI. The date of this Bull was November the 6th, 1789. By the mysterious and merciful dispensations of Providence, that same storm which had shaken in France the very foundations of the Catholic religion, was the means of spreading its truths on the other side of the ocean. When Madame Duchesne arrived in America, four new bishoprics had been erected since 1810, that of Boston, where the virtuous and amiable Mgr. de Cheverus attracted souls in great number to the Church; Bardstown, governed by the saintly Mgr. Flaget, Philadelphia by Dr. Egan, and New York by Dr. Connolly. Mgr. Ambroise Maréchal, Archbishop of Baltimore, a Sulpician priest of the greatest merit, was the Primate of all these dioceses. A number of apostolic men, banished from their own country, surrounded these prelates, and carried into those regions the blessing of their faith. Amongst them were M. Matignon, who had accompanied Mgr. de Cheverus in his exile, M. Dubois, Curé of Emmetsburg, and afterwards Bishop of New York, M. Duhamel, and M. Moranvillé, who from Guiana had come to evangelize the United States, the holy M. Bruté, future Bishop of Indiana, Charles Nerinckx, Edward Fenwick, and the Dominican John Hill, natives of the Low Countries, Anthony Kohlmann, an Alsacian, who founded the College of Georgetown on the Potomac, and then the valiant Russian missioner Dimitri Galitzin, who had abandoned his ancestral possessions, and was spreading far and wide treasures of grace in the deep valleys of Alleghany.

With regard to the second zone we spoke of, and especially that part of it which used to form the French

province of Louisiana, it was at that moment undergoing important changes. The whole of that vast district was under the superintendence of the Bishop of New Orleans. This immense diocese, which had been erected at the epoch of Spanish dominion, comprised almost all the basin of the Mississippi and extended over a space of twelve hundred leagues, from the mouth of the river up to the Indian territory beyond St. Louis. The population of this vast tract of land did not exceed two hundred and twenty thousand souls. This number comprised about one hundred and fifty thousand white men and negroes, and one hundred thousand Indians belonging to about fifty different tribes. The European colonists were disseminated and scattered about that immense valley, and had built in it a number of towns and villages, if indeed sets of wooden cabins, which could be carried away and wheeled about, deserved to be thus called. On the right bank of the great river, besides St. Louis and St. Charles on the Missouri, there were the Portage of the Sioux, where the Indians used to carry their canoes from one river to another, Sainte Marie des Barreins, where Mgr. Dubourg founded his seminary, and Saint Ferdinand, or Fleurissant, where the Sacred Heart was to establish itself.

On the same bank stood Sainte Geneviève, Cape Girardeau, New Madrid, and Petite Prairie. Further below were to be found Arkansas, on the river of that name, Providence, Saint Joseph, Pointe Coupée, and Bâton-Rouge, and to the east Vermillonville, Grand-Coteau, the Opelousas, and Natchitoches. Then on the left bank was New Orleans, and higher up Yberville, Natchez, the prairie of Rocher and Cahokia, which was almost opposite St. Louis. Beyond these centres of European civilization, such as they were, in wide savannahs and endless forests, Indian tribes, such as the Sioux and the Osages wandered like sheep without a shepherd.

The white population was for the most part Catholic, but Protestantism was gaining ground amongst them. Methodists, Quakers, Anabaptists, and Presbyterians had ministers, chapels, and schools, "dividing Jesus Christ," as the Apostle says, and Unitarianism, recommended at that time by Dr. Channing's eloquent preaching, converted to deism a number of persons, attracted by a vague undefined faith and an easy morality. As to the Indians, many of them had relapsed into heathenism; only a few of them preserved a remembrance of the "black Robes," as they used to call the Catholic missionaries, and longed for teachers of the "French prayer." The harvest was ample, but the labourers few. The Spanish Bishop of New Orleans, Don Louis Penalvez de Cardenas, having been transferred in 1801 to the Metropolitan See of Guatemala in Central America, Louisiana, which had soon afterwards become American, was placed under the jurisdiction of Dr. Carroll, Bishop of Baltimore. Religion languished under the government of the Vicars-General M. l'Abbé Olivier and M. l'Abbé Sibour, excellent priests though they were, and did not revive till Mgr. Dubourg was consecrated, and named Bishop of New Orleans. Till then the extreme scarcity of priests nullified all attempts at improvement. In that country which now possesses two archbishoprics and nine bishoprics, hardly forty priests were to be found, when Mgr. Dubourg went to France to seek for recruits, and brought back with him a valiant band of Apostles, worthy of his zeal, though still insufficient in numbers. All of them were true labourers in the vineyard, and some of them holy and distinguished men. We shall find in this history Félix de Andreis, Joseph Rosati, and Léon de Nekere working with Mother Duchesne. A great number of these priests were Italian Lazarists, Acquaroni and Brother Blanca amongst others. Some belonged to other religious orders, or were secular priests like Antoine Blanc, Mathias

Loras, Michel Portier. Mgr. Dubourg had recruited them in France, and especially in the diocese of Lyons, which was beginning then to be what it has now so preeminently become, a perfect nursery of apostles for the foreign missions.

New Orleans had been up to that time the residence of the Bishop, but when he came back from France, Mgr. Dubourg left that town and the province of Lower Louisiana, where he had met with great difficulties at the hands of an administrator, and took up his own abode at Saint Louis, as the most advanced post of the Apostolic conquest he was planning.

It was there that on the 21st of August, 1818, Madame Duchesne, under the escort of Captain Reid, the owner of the steamboat, made her appearance at the Bishop's abode, and was most kindly received by Mgr. Dubourg. The sight of his episcopal residence was enough to show her and her Sisters what they had to expect in this hard mission. Mgr. Dubourg's palace was a sort of barn, in which he led almost as austere a life as the Fathers of the Desert. One only room, and that a small one, served for a dormitory, a dining-room and a study for himself and four or five other priests, some of whom were ill. His church was a wooden tenement, full of holes. Two days after the arrival of the little colony of the Sacred Heart, on the 25th of August, the feast of the parish was celebrated. Madame Duchesne, used as she was to the state and pomp of episcopal functions in France, was astonished to see Mgr. Dubourg standing by the organ like a simple chorister to direct the music for more than an hour. Four days afterwards she wrote: "We are indeed in the headquarters of poverty. There is every appearance that we shall sow in tears, and too happy shall we be to do so if others are to reap in joy, surrounded by the children our prayers will have won for them."

If Madame Duchesne found in America the poverty of the first ages of the Church, she also found there the heroism of primitive Christianity. She wrote as follows to Mother Theresa: "I thank God that I did not know beforehand all the obstacles we should meet with, or rather, that having had a presentiment of them, I had the will to persevere. Shall I tell you what it is that urges me on? It is the example of the saintly clergy of this country, and their ardent zeal, men like Mgr. de Cheverus, Bishop of Boston, or Mgr. Flaget, Bishop of Bardstown, who sleeps in a hut so full of holes that the pigs make their way into his room. He serves several parishes, and gives away his last shirt; and he is so poor that it often happens that he cannot pay two sous to be ferried over the river. He is changing the face of Kentucky, where ten years ago religion was unknown. And above all things, I place the example of our good Bishop, who is all things to all men, who suffers with generous fortitude, works incessantly, and has no other means than those he draws from France. He has plenty of trials; but how great he is in the midst of his trials!"

He was indeed great that Bishop, who, in the midst of the most complete personal destitution, found means to build cathedrals, churches, and colleges, and to support at his own expense more than fifty persons, including priests, clerics, and seminarists for the service of the Church. Feeble in body, but invincibly valiant in soul, he had suffered greatly from the revolutionary persecution which had sent him into banishment. He was a native of St. Domingo; his parents French colonists. At an early age he had felt a vocation for the priesthood, and came to France in order to pursue his studies with that object. He was ordained in Paris, and joined the venerable Society of St. Sulpice. When quite a young man, he was placed by M. Emery at the head of the preparatory school at

Issy, and on the eve of the fatal 2nd September, 1793, narrowly escaped death at the hands of the Marseillais and Federalists of the 10th of August, who invaded and sacked the house. He happened to be absent at that moment, and took refuge in Spain, whence he embarked for America, where a colony of priests of his Society had been established at Baltimore ever since 1791. Mgr. Dubourg was residing in this seminary when Dr. Carroll, with the permission of his Superiors, appointed him Director of the new College of Georgetown, near Washington. He was afterwards employed in the same way at Havannah, and then at Baltimore, where he founded the College of St. Mary, which prospered so wonderfully, that in 1805 the Legislature of Maryland conferred on it the title of University. He was at once a distinguished professor, a great preacher, and an eminent controversialist, as well as a holy director. His knowledge of souls and great spirituality enabled him to understand and guide in her apostolic works, Elizabeth Seton, the gifted and zealous Foundress of the Sisters of Charity in America. After his nomination to the See of New Orleans, he came to Europe, and it was at Rome he was consecrated bishop. As soon as he had been elevated to that dignity, Mgr. Dubourg travelled about France and the Low Countries, kindling as he went in the hearts of his hearers a burning zeal for the foreign missions.

On board the royal vessel *La Caravane*, which conveyed him back to America, Mgr. Dubourg evangelized the crew. All the sailors and most of the officers went to confession, and when he was leaving the ship, they all fell on their knees and begged for his blessing, and it was indeed a wonderful blessing that they thus made their peace with God, for *La Caravane* on its homeward passage encountered a fearful storm, and almost all the crew were drowned.

The holy Bishop's return to Louisiana was a truly apostolic achievement. He had landed at the port of

Annapolis, whence he proceeded to Baltimore, and then to St. Louis, travelling like a true servant of Christ. Poor and on foot, at the head of the priests he had brought with him, he bravely crossed a space of five or six hundred miles, through Maryland and Pensylvania, with a staff in his hand, pushing his way along roadless tracts of country, through thick brushwood, which often tore his clothes and his skin. Near Pittsburg his companions, seeing him faint and exhausted, and his feet bleeding, procured a horse for him, but he refused to make use of it, declaring that the captain must set the example to his soldiers. From Pittsburg to Louisville, the missionary party descended the Ohio in a boat, of which the Bishop was at once master, pilot, and boatman, keeping watch in his turn, and doing the hardest work with the priest who accompanied him. When they entered the province of the Illinois, he felt himself on the soil of his missions. His first act was to plant a cross, and kneeling down before it, he implored the Divine Redeemer to apply the merits of His precious Blood to that country. On his way through Louisville, he had been to visit at Bardstown his old friend Mgr. Flaget, whom he had not seen for eight years. Both came together to St. Louis, where they arrived on the 6th of January, 1818. His people were expecting him, and he walked straight to the church, where all the inhabitants of the city, Protestants as well as Catholics, followed him, eager to see and to hear the new Bishop.

After sending his priests to different parts of his immense diocese, Mgr. Dubourg hastened to assign to Madame Duchesne and her nuns the post he had in view for them. Finding it impossible to establish them at St. Louis, where there was not even a room to be had, he proposed that they should take up their residence at St. Charles on the Missouri. "It is a small town," he said, "at a few leagues from this place, where you will have

a house with a garden and an orchard. For the present you can stay there whilst we consider what should be your future destination. . . . We must till before we plant. You and I shall have to spend our lives in that ungrateful labour: our successors will reap in this world; we must be satisfied to look for our reward in Heaven." He then explained to them that he saw great advantages in the position of St. Charles, which was likely he thought to become one of the most considerable cities in America. "It is situated," he said, "on the banks of the Missouri, which are becoming every day more populous, and are about to form one of the States of the Federal Republic. Families are constantly going there and purchasing land, which is rising in price to a startling degree. Moreover, if the plan succeeds of making a canal, which through the Ohio and the Mississippi will open a way by water to New York, St. Charles will have easier communication with Europe than even New Orleans." These projects, depending more or less on doubtful issues, did not hide from Madame Duchesne the present dismal aspect of the proposed scheme. She and her nuns had always hoped for a foundation in the episcopal city, under the immediate protection of Mgr. Dubourg and in the midst of all the spiritual assistance they required. It was a cruel disappointment to find themselves banished to a distance of ten leagues further to the north, where they would be quite isolated. She saw at once the full extent of the sacrifice required of them, and wrote about it as follows to Father Barat: "We are going to live in a small hired house. Nothing has begun, nothing can be even planned for our works. Monseigneur, who is building a church with the help of the inhabitants, who are quite enough burthened as it is, has explained to us the difficulty of our position. He says we must love our present humiliations and only look to the future for results. I listened to him

like a rock into which holes were being bored. I go on with closed eyes. If it be God's will Providence will open a way. My Sisters are more courageous and fervent than I am. They look at the Cross and they embrace it."

Such are indeed the sentiments expressed in a letter from Madame Octavie Berthold to Mother Barat :

"My dear Reverend Mother,—I find every day more that you acted according to God's will by letting me come here. In proportion to the near approach of our journey's end, did my heart seem to expand. The farther I felt myself from every thing I cared for on earth, the more it seemed to enlarge. . . . We shall be in great need in many respects, and then it is that your daughter will feel the deepest joy." Knowing the one subject of anxiety which most occupied the Mother General, she reassures her as follows : "Though the House of St. Charles will be two thousand five hundred and twelve leagues from Paris, it will be united I am sure both in heart and mind with the mother-house. Rather than alter in the least point our ideas about the Society, I would sooner return without bread or money, much preferring to perform that long journey without any assistance than to deviate from the path which you have taught us to tread."

It was a hard sacrifice the Sacred Heart had to make in leaving St. Louis, and all the harder to Madame Duchesne that she did not foresee any possibility of returning there. "Without a special stroke of Providence," she wrote, "I do not see what will ever bring us back to this place. It is only the children who wish us to stay. Spoilt as they are, they would like to come to us, but their parents do not appreciate the advantage of a Christian education. Even the slaves indulge in extravagant luxury. Theatres and ball-rooms are built readily enough, but the most wealthy persons here would not give a penny for a house of education."

We must in justice add that Madame Duchesne found reason later to modify this too severe judgment. But she had discerned already the great obstacle against which her zeal too often struggled in vain, the utilitarian spirit and the self-indulgent habits which mar the virtues of the American race to such a degree that they have become characteristic peculiarities of that great nation. The daughters of General Pratt were amongst the children who wished to keep Madame Duchesne at St. Louis. It was in his house that the five nuns had been lodging since their arrival, and all his family circle had received them with the most obliging hospitality. Madame Duchesne called Mr. Pratt her temporal father. "His wife," she wrote, "is the most excellent woman at St. Louis. She has five little girls, excessively spoilt, but who are so fond of us that they want to leave their parents and come to the convent. When we go out they are quite afraid that we may be going away. Céleste especially four or five times a day, and at the most inopportune moments, keeps tormenting her parents to let her come to us. Those five children are charming, and have beautiful voices. They are related to almost every body in the town, and quite a crowd of little cousins, all of them very attractive, have been to see the nuns and want to stay with them. One of them did not sleep in consequence of her joy at our arrival. I ascribe these feelings to the inspirations of their good angels. The little black girls are just the same. They open wide their mouths, as well as their eyes, to stare at us. And when Madame Octavie made one of them sit near her at church, the others said: 'Oh, how lucky you are!' All this youthful population and the savages we see here are very loveable."

Another great reason would have made Madame Duchesne and her daughters cling to St. Louis. They valued greatly the spiritual direction of the Bishop, whose

rough frankness suited particularly her manly character. "He is as firm as he is good," she said in the same letter, "he already knows me well and has told me home truths."

But it was necessary to give up all these fond wishes, and on the 7th of September, 1818, the little colony went to St. Charles. Mgr. Dubourg accompanied them, riding alongside their carriage, and helped the nuns to cross the river. The good men who carried their luggage refused to receive a penny for their trouble, and said that priests and nuns were to them living pictures of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Madame Duchesne had remained only three weeks at St. Louis, but that short stay had enabled her to take as it were a general survey of the state of Catholicism and the work of the missions in that part of Christendom. She was not to stay long either at St. Charles or Missouri. The places where she took up her abode were more and more insignificant as far as appearances went. But as Count de Maistre said: "No great things have ever begun on a great scale." The influence of her apostolic soul overflowed, as it were, the limits of her sphere. By dint of prayer, of desires, of energy, of action, and above all by the example of her complete self-sacrifice, Madame Duchesne embraced the whole of America. We see it by her letters. It will therefore assist us to give a true and real history of her labours if we describe the progress of that Church which her humble apostleship so ardently seconded.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Madame Duchesne at St. Charles of Missouri. Her boundless zeal. Her little school. Her struggles against penury. Her heroic efforts baffled. The removal to Fleurissant.*

1818—1819.

St. Charles, where the little colony of the Sacred Heart was about to establish itself, was next to St. Louis and Ste. Geneviève, the most important settlement in Louisiana. Still its population did not number at that time more than five hundred families encamped rather than established within its limits, and inhabiting wooden cabins. It was situated at the furthest point of the river reached by the steamers, and exactly opposite to the savage tribe of the Sioux.

The river gave this place all its importance. The Missouri takes its rise amidst the Rocky Mountains, and gathering in its wide bosom numerous tributary streams, it reaches, after many falls and breaks, the prairies of the State to which it gives its name, and mingles its waters with those of the Mississippi near St. Charles. This spot, at the confluence of two such great rivers, could not fail to attract the attention of the first colonists. They made St. Charles into a commercial settlement which was expected to turn out a flourishing town.

The house which the Bishop had taken for the nuns was on a height overlooking the Missouri. It was composed of five little rooms with one somewhat larger in the centre of the building. Small as was this primitive abode they

found room in it for a little chapel, which they ornamented to the best of their ability. Madame Duchesne had happened to find at Grenoble, amongst the sweepings of a church, a relic of St. Francis Regis, and had promised her holy protector that if she was ever so happy as to go to the foreign missions she would pay him special honours. This relic was placed in the chapel of St. Charles near the tabernacle as a trophy of victory.

She wrote that their chapel resembled in size the sanctuary of their house in the Rue des Postes, at Paris, and that everything in that little refuge was most devotional. The statue of the Blessed Virgin touched the ceiling, and they had a picture of the Sacred Heart with fifty figures around it, which came from Rome, one of our Blessed Lord opening His Divine Heart, also from Rome, a painting of the Nativity, a charming adoration of the three Kings, a reliquary containing a piece of the true Cross, of the holy thorn and the sponge, and relics of the Holy Family, the Apostles, and also of St. Ignatius and St. Francis Regis. It must indeed have been an inexpressible consolation to Madame Duchesne to find herself thus surrounded with the objects of her deepest devotion.

The good Bishop was delighted to find the little community in good spirits, and encouraged their zeal by words full of hope and kindness. "Monseigneur animates us by his example," the Superior wrote; "he says that we are the grain of mustard seed, and that great blessings are in store for us. He seems very much pleased with Eugénie and Octavie. When he saw them laugh whilst they were putting our poor house to-rights, he said to me, 'Look at those young creatures, who might have had a brilliant existence, and who are so cheerful here. Oh, it is admirable! As to us, we are only old sinners.' They are all making great strides in perfection." On the 8th of September, the feast of the Blessed Virgin's Nativity, the

Bishop said Mass on the temporary altar, and on the 11th left the Blessed Sacrament in the little chapel. On the following day he went to the Portage des Sioux, where Madame Duchesne would have fain accompanied him, for she never lost sight of her dear savages.

Before leaving St. Louis on the 14th of September the Bishop sent to Madame Duchesne the episcopal approval of the Institute of the Sacred Heart for his whole immense diocese, and he added to it his warm acknowledgments: "I can only thank God that by sending you into the country committed to my care, He has fulfilled all my wishes for the education of youth. You may rely upon it that the welfare and increase of your establishments will be the constant object of my efforts, and I shall consider the period of my episcopate, however long it may last, as perfectly well employed if I succeed in propagating and consolidating your Institute in my diocese."

But would that Institute, established as it had been in view of the needs of Europe, suit the Christian population of the new world? This had at first struck the Bishop as a doubt. Madame Duchesne wrote in her journal: "Monseigneur had thoughts of changing some of our rules in order to adapt them to the ideas of this country. But as we all declared that we would change nothing without the permission of our Superior General, he said, 'You have five heads in one cap,' and he has acknowledged that it was better to make no changes."

About three weeks afterwards Madame Duchesne received acknowledgments far more important still than those of the Bishop, much as she valued his approbation. Cardinal Litta who, as we have already said, had been consulted by M. Perreau as to the expediency of the Mission of the Sacred Heart in America, had transmitted to him in the following terms the answer of Pius VII., which Mother Barat hastened to forward to Madame Duchesne.

His Eminence wrote: "I found that the Holy Father had been already apprised of this happy event, which gave him the greatest satisfaction, and he renews his apostolical benediction to these good nuns. His Holiness said, 'I am greatly pleased with this undertaking, and I beseech our Lord to bless the pious intentions of those who for the glory of His Name have so generously left behind their native land and their relatives. I hope God will accomplish His merciful designs towards that vineyard where He is sending so many labourers.'"

To this letter, which was written in French, another was added in Latin from Cardinal Fontana, addressed also to M. Perreau. "His Holiness," it says, "has been delighted to see how these courageous nuns, abandoning everything to follow Christ, and rising above the weakness of their sex, have not been afraid of crossing the wide ocean in order to transport their pious Institute into savage countries, and thus to devote themselves to the greater glory of God, the honour of the Church, and the salvation of souls. His Holiness wishes them the most prosperous success, and gives, in the most affectionate terms, his apostolical benediction, not only to those already in America, but also to all who are preparing to join them. We have nothing, then, to add, except the assurance of Pius VII.'s fatherly goodwill towards these holy women, and thus to afford them a precious consolation in their troubles and a well-merited relief amidst their toils."

Madame Duchesne felt the full importance of these documents, which gave to her undertaking the most august of sanctions. Henceforward she saw her little skiff taken as it were in tow by the bark of St. Peter, and could not help exclaiming, "My eyes were filled with sweet tears when I heard the Sovereign Pontiff adding his blessing and the sanction of his authority to all the other tokens of God's will as to our mission. To-morrow we shall sing

a *Te Deum*, and a Mass of Thanksgiving will be said in our behalf."

L'Abbé Perreau added to these two documents a long letter of his own to Madame Duchesne. It was one of spiritual and temporal direction, full of wisdom and prudence, as well as breathing an ardent spirit of charity. He writes to her as follows: "This is the first letter I have the happiness of writing to you since your departure for the promised land. Worthless as I am, you must, however, be certain that I have too much at heart the glory of God and the salvation of the poor Indians to forget those whom God has vouchsafed to summon as labourers in a vineyard hitherto but little favoured by Heavenly graces. Moreover, the spiritual ties which it has been the will of God should exist between us are too precious for me not to maintain them as long as I live. They were formed by charity, and I hope that the Divine Heart of Jesus will derive glory from them."

Mother Duchesne having expressed to her director the desire she felt for martyrdom, he said: "It must indeed be a joy to a soul which loves God to end this mortal existence by such a sacrifice, but you should always consider yourself unworthy of so beautiful a death, and live only in the firm determination to give yourself without any restriction to your Divine Spouse, and always to do with all your heart what He asks of you."

At the end of a few weeks Mother Duchesne was able to form an estimate of the sort of apostolate she was about to exercise. The population of St. Charles, like that of all the country, was composed of Americans from the east, of persons of mixed races, French and Canadians, of Germans, Irish, half-caste savages and negroes. These various elements seemed to form as it were successive strata on the soil of the new world, and to constitute an agglomeration which was gradually amalgamating into a nation. The hunters

of the prairies, the trappers, the adventurers of every kind, who acted as pioneers of an advancing civilisation, and vanished before it, frequented these regions, and in the meantime the emigrants continually increased in number, and tilled in every direction the marshy plains of the far west. With her eyes and her heart Madame Duchesne was ever following the families which passed through St. Charles on their way to the neighbouring settlements. She relates that seldom a week or a day elapsed that she did not see troops of labourers with their wives and children, a few oxen or sheep, and their implements of tillage marching towards those fertile deserts. She admired and envied them, and in this emigration of men of every race, closely following the days of revolutionary destruction in Europe, it seemed to her as if the spectacle was renewed which the world presented when, after the Deluge and the Confusion of Tongues, the tribes of all the earth took possession of a new inheritance.

But what of course most occupied her was the advancement of religious interests in that country. She rejoiced at the purchase of land in the Upper Missouri which had recently been made by the Jesuit Father at the head of the College of Georgetown, with the view of propagating the Gospel in that region, and hoped that at the town of Franklin, which was rapidly rising, the Society of Jesus would also found a college, and by the gradual erection of small habitations extend their operations into distant localities where the Word of God had not yet been preached. She mentions also with delight that the Lazarists had begun their seminary at Bois Brulé, one of the most fervent missions in that country, and that M. Liautard's priests had founded a college at Saint Louis. She speaks of the general expectation that these provinces would become important States, and that during the next winter the Missouri would form a new one with St. Louis for its

capital, where commerce with the Sioux and other savage tribes would greatly increase, and be the means of bringing within reach of these poor people the blessed influences of religion.

But such a result could only be purchased by dint of long and painful struggles with the vices of this strangely composed population. The independent and wandering life of the emigrants, living in these wilds without homes or altars, with no other thought but the acquisition of wealth, had given rise to a fearful and degrading immorality. "A few years ago," Madame Duchesne wrote, "the scenes this country presented resembled the bacchanalian orgies of Pagan days. Men and girls spent their time in dancing and drinking whiskey. Now appearances are improved, but the lives they lead are as immoral as those of the savages." Education was the only hope for this perverted population, and the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus the only mode of arresting the progress of decay in this lawless society. It was for this object that the Jesuits were founding colleges wherever they could, and that at St. Charles the Nuns of the Sacred Heart opened in the month of October schools for children of all classes. A number of poor children came; but no words could describe their ignorance and their bad habits. Madame Duchesne wrote: "About Heaven and Hell they know absolutely nothing, nor about our Lord Jesus Christ. When we tell them the history of His Birth, His Life, and His Death, they stare at us, and I am obliged to say to them continually: 'Mind it is all true!' Only two of them know more than the letters of the alphabet, and yet with all that ignorance we have to fight against the love of dress. Some of our pupils have more gowns than chemises, and above all than pocket-handkerchiefs. They wear embroidered frocks, rich silk dresses with lace and gauze flounces."

Madame Duchesne would have liked to admit into her

little school the negro and half-caste children. M. Perreau felt obliged to advise her not to do so, for it would have utterly ruined their undertaking. But he added that in principle they ought not to establish the exclusion of persons of colour from the day schools or boarding schools, or even the novitiate. "You must firmly maintain this," he said, "and if you were independent I would prefer that you should devote yourselves in preference to those who are most miserable, and for that reason most dear to the Heart of our Lord. Always incline to that side. It is there that you will find most surely your Divine Spouse, Who loves what is most humble."

But the savages were Madame Duchesne's strong, persistent, invincible attraction. When she saw passing along the banks of the river these wandering families, men carrying arms, and the women their children clothed in rags, and disfigured by tatooing, their face, ears, and nose ornamented by iron or tin rings, their heads adorned by plumes, and bearing on their sometimes singularly noble features a melancholy expression as if they were mourning by anticipation the fall of their race, she felt all her zeal for their souls redoubled. Nevertheless, she was not deceived as to their vices, and wrote as follows: "Formerly we entertained the pleasing thought of instructing docile and innocent savages, but the women as well as the men are idle and addicted to drinking. Moreover we have half-castes who unite all the moral miseries of the two races." But far from being discouraged, she adds: "I am not the less persuaded that God had His designs in bringing us here." These designs she believed to be an apostolate amongst the savages of the north. Her first impulse was to make these dear souls acquainted with the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In November, she wrote: "The Sacred Heart is now to be seen in many churches, for in order to represent it, I have taken to painting again." In another letter

she says: "We have had the happiness of placing pictures of the Sacred Heart in several churches in this neighbourhood. They have been in some cases substituted for others which had been put up out of sheer ignorance. At Portage des Sioux, for instance, the walls were adorned with representations of Bacchus and Venus."

Madame Duchesne wrote: "At St. Charles, the congregation did not know how to answer *Amen* in Church. Now the children of our day school sing at Benediction, and have learnt hymns to the Sacred Heart. They are full of emulation, and very intelligent. M. Richard, our curé and chaplain, was delighted on All Saints' Day. It was the close of a little retreat of three days, which he had given them." This Abbé Richard was not the celebrated M. Gabriel Richard, the apostle of Michigan, but he was, like him, a priest after God's heart. His thin, extenuated frame and austere thoughtful countenance gave him an ascetic appearance more likely to inspire awe than to attract, but he was a man of the highest merit, who, in spite of his cold manner and extreme reserve in conversation, was most devoted and kind hearted. "I must say that he never flattered me, and I am grateful to him for it," Madame Duchesne said; and in her humility she goes on to praise her companions, and to ascribe to them all the good they were beginning to do. "It would require saints to cultivate souls as yet so little prepared. It is all the more painful to me that I am so deficient in holiness. As to Octavie and Eugénie, they are making great strides in the way of perfection, and the little good we are doing is entirely their work. Every one likes Eugénie. When we three are together, it is always her that people look at, especially if she speaks."

But on the other hand, Madame Audé wrote to Mother Barat: "As a child which can do nothing without its mother's help, I feel no strength but in the thought that

I have the happiness of being united to you as *your little child*, a name most dear to me. It is my joy and my happiness. I found a true life in the Society, which I should lose if separated from it."

The spiritual element is the most important in a religious foundation, but it is impossible that a work can exist in this world without the secondary but necessary condition of means of subsistence, and these were not to be found at St. Charles. As Madame Duchesne had foreseen, that place was totally without resources for the support of a religious community, and before she had been there two months the struggle for life began with all the antagonistic circumstances of destitution, a bad climate, and sufferings of all sorts. From the outset no favourable result could be expected. In the first place, a remunerative school proved out of the question. No pupils were forthcoming. The poor school was rapidly supplied with children, but, on the other hand, the two Miss Pratts, Emily and Theresa, and Pélagie Chouteau, whom they had brought with them from St. Louis, constituted the whole of the young ladies' establishment. Ruin was staring them in the face. Madame Duchesne and her daughters looked upon the prospect without dismay, and resolved to suffer as far as was possible rather than abandon their post. By their work, numerous privations, and their unalterable patience, they sought means to prolong their existence under the wretched conditions which we are about to describe.

The little domain of St. Charles was composed of two acres, to which the names of a garden and an orchard were by courtesy given, but which were so full of brushwood that it was difficult even to walk in them. Not even for ten francs a day could labourers be found to cultivate them. In a letter, dated October 8th, Mother Duchesne says: "We take to all sorts of new occupations here. We dig, we water the cows, carry manure, and clean the stable. Ours

is the only one in the place, for here the animals run about as they like. All this suits me. For my own sake and that of the community, I should be delighted to be employed in the meanest housework." In another letter she writes: "I was made to be a servant. Other gifts are necessary for the guidance of souls, but God does everything Himself."

The Bishop gave every encouragement he could to his courageous daughters, but more by his example than by gifts, for he was himself very poor. "My children, you cannot be so destitute as I was when I began my work," he used to say to them.

As time went on, about three months after their arrival at St. Charles, matters had arrived at such a pass that the little community almost starved. Madame Duchesne mentions in her Journal that the general scarcity in that country deprived them of bread, even of bread made with maize. It took a fortnight to convey it to them from a distance. Water was also very difficult to get, as they had no well; a stream made muddy by the feet of the cattle, and often frozen, was of little assistance. At last an obliging man brought them some in a tub on his cart from the Missouri, which they filtered to make it drinkable.

As winter advanced the situation became still more trying. The climate of that country is liable to the most sudden changes. Almost suddenly the temperature varies from tropical heat to icy coldness. In the middle of December Madame Duchesne wrote that the river was entirely frozen. "It is so cold that the water freezes close by the fire, as well as the linen placed there to dry. We have had the blessing of being actually deprived of bread and of water. I always expected the first of these privations, but on the banks of the Missouri I hardly anticipated the last. Marguerite brought back to-day two pitchers from neighbouring springs, one half filled with water and the

other with ice. Neither windows nor doors shut at all. Our firewood is too thick for use, and we have nobody to chop it. People here work only just and when they choose, and are too proud to appear to require it."

At last every resource failed. With the river frozen and the steamer no longer able to navigate, the Sisters were reduced to a slender provision of maize, potatoes, and salt fish. They had no eggs, no butter, no oil, except bears' oil. The price of provisions rose so high that the means of the Sisters totally failed; and moreover there was no money in the neighbourhood. For a while this need was supplied by notes issued from the southern banks. But soon all those banks became bankrupt, and credit utterly submerged in a general abyss — meanwhile murders, poisonings, and conflagrations were heard of in every direction. Sometimes at night Madame Duchesne and her Sisters were awakened by a roar which sounded like the noise of a violent storm, and when they opened their eyes they saw a belt of red light extending over the whole horizon. The prairies were on fire and the ruddy waves of that terrible conflagration approached sometimes close to St. Charles. Day and night watch had to be kept over its fragile buildings, to preserve them from the sparks which the wind blew towards the village composed of wooden tenements: all the sufferings incident to a besieged town seemed combined to ruin their undertaking.

Madame Duchesne was the first whose strength failed in this terrible struggle. She was always in the habit of depriving herself of everything for the sake of others, and having done so to the utmost under these terrible circumstances, she felt a sudden attack of weakness, which made her for a moment think that death was approaching. Considering the energy of her courageous nature, it is easy to see by the following words what she expected: "I have the consolation of feeling strength of soul and body both

diminishing. This humbles me before God and makes me think that the end is at hand."

It was not discouragement which inspired those words. Confidence, thankfulness, strength and joy overcame every temptation to despondency. We find in her letters such sentences as these: "But we are happy in the midst of this destitution." "There is happiness in our hourly dependence on the visible aid of God which it inspires." "Our present condition is exactly what we ought to desire, for it is full of thorns and difficulties, but sweetened by the unction of Divine grace and lightened by a merciful Providence, which at every moment we feel assisting us." And again: "I never have the least doubt as to the will of God and His watchful care for the extension of His work in this country."

In the spring Madame Duchesne's health improved, and her holy confidence increased. She wrote at that time: "I thought I should entirely lose my health here, but I am quite well again and have no ailments now, and yet I have so much to expiate. But my consolations exceed my trials . . . my prayer is one continual thanksgiving for the knowledge of that much desired will of God, which will be clearer still as time goes on and the Sacred Heart and its daughters extend the reign of Christ all over this land."

A new trial came upon them soon afterwards, but one so evidently tempered by Divine assistance that pain and consolation were strangely combined in it. On Holy Thursday, 1819, the drapery round the altar of their small chapel, where the Blessed Sacrament was, caught fire and the whole of the little sanctuary was consumed by the flames; the house would have been destroyed if a pouring rain which happened to be falling at that moment had not supplied water enough to prevent the fire reaching the floor. Madame Duchesne was grieving at the thought that the Holy Species were burnt, when on drawing near to the

charred remains of the altar she saw in the midst of them a small black square, and discovered that this was the pall which covered the paten. The chalice had been thrown down and the Blessed Sacrament had fallen in that place without being separated from the paten. Under the calcinated pall the Sacred Host remained white and entire. With tender love and profound respect, It was replaced in the tabernacle. The nuns spent the night in adoration, wondering over the goodness of God, Who had left them, as Madame Duchesne said, all that was most precious in their chapel, the Blessed Sacrament, the tabernacle, the sacred relics, the statue of the Blessed Virgin, and the picture of the Divine Heart. It seemed as if our Lord had wished to give them a sign that though all else might perish He would always remain with them whatever happened.

Hard and trying also was the work of education in the little school. It was not easy for poor strangers to cultivate souls so long neglected, so hardened with pride, so influenced by bad inclinations. The ignorance of the children was on a level with their arrogant conceit. If to urge them to exert themselves they were told of the diligence of the pupils in French schools, they tossed their heads and said: "But we are not French girls." And if one of their own schoolfellows was more docile than the rest, they used to tell her that she "obeyed like a nigger." Madame Duchesne speaks in many of her letters of the hopeless self-indulgence of these girls, brought up, flattered and spoiled by their black nurses, and conversant with the evils which slavery produced in the homes of their parents. Their love of luxury, of dress, of dancing, their impropriety of manners, and eagerness for noxious reading, she bitterly deplored. But always with a courageous hope of eventually doing good and an unshaken trust in God.

First Communion is always a time when special graces

abound. It is ever a harvest-tide for the Sacred Heart, and St. Charles proved no exception to the rule, as we can see by the following extracts from Madame Duchesne's letters: "Madame Eugénie Audé is venerated by the children of her class. As they made their first Communion at the parish church on the feast of the Assumption, she accompanied them, which I think was what you would approve of, dear Reverend Mother. As she was coming home with her little troop of ten or twelve children, people said as they passed by: 'There goes that good Sister.' It is their first Communion, which has begun to show us that there are amongst these children some capable of real virtue." One of the girls, who used to be very proud and rebellious, had knelt down when her grandfather scolded her and asked forgiveness. Another, in order to conquer human respect, had, like a slave, carried eight pitchers of water. She had done this in a spirit of penance and self-sacrifice to prepare herself for the reception of the Blessed Sacrament. "They are so zealous," Madame Duchesne said, "that some of them go too far."

But notwithstanding the good opinion they inspired, the good example of their pupils, and the courage of the nuns, the temporal affairs of the house did not improve. At the end of a year they had only six or eight pupils, and Mother Barat wrote anxious letters: "How much I regret, my dear daughters, that Monseigneur has established you in a place so little suitable for your works. In a village and so far from the families who would be inclined to send their daughters to your school, it can never get on. This is an alarming prospect for your Mother and our Society."

It was impossible to go on in this way. The lease of the house they lived in was about to expire, and Mgr. Dubourg refused the offer of the inhabitants of St. Charles who wanted to give a site to the nuns of the Sacred Heart on which to build a house. He wrote

to Madame Barat that the school consisting chiefly of young girls from St. Louis, St. Charles was very inconveniently situated for the purpose. The two places were separated by marshes, often flooded and dangerous, and the terrible Missouri, which during three or four months of the year was impassable. This had greatly restricted the number of their pupils. Great as was Madame Duchesne's reluctance to desert her post, she felt herself that it was impossible to remain there. "In order to be convinced of it," she said, "it was only necessary to spend a winter here, even though it proved an exceptionally mild one. We merely vegetate in this place and forego the good we might do elsewhere."

She agreed at last to a change of abode. She and Madame Octavie Berthold went with Mgr. Dubourg and the Abbé Nekere, who became afterwards Bishop of New Orleans, to visit the residence which the former had in view for them in the village of Fleurissant, close to St. Louis. But it seemed hard to abandon entirely St. Charles—not to leave there at any rate a little garrison. "There are so many interesting children here and some of them devoted to the Sacred Heart," Madame Duchesne wrote. "I think we must leave there Sister Eugénie for the day school. The children are so fond of her. When she came out of her retreat they were all crying for joy, and she could not restrain her own tears. When they heard we were going away the older girls said: 'We shall soon pack up and follow you;' and even the little ones begged to be taken away, and said they had prayed for it to the Heart of Jesus."

But Madame Barat wisely objected to this plan of separation, and it was accordingly given up. On the 26th of August Mgr. Dubourg told the nuns they would soon have to vacate their house, and their departure was fixed for the 3rd of September. M. Richard said Mass in the

morning and afterwards made a parting address to the little colony. The Journal of the community mentions that he as well as the Sisters were deeply affected, and that he went away with a heavy heart, refusing to stay for breakfast. Some time afterwards Madame Duchesne wrote: "That excellent priest despairs of carrying on his parish without a school. He has been constantly ill since we left St. Charles."

Madame Audé started first with the luggage of the community. The children and their parents went to the river side to meet her, and with tears she took leave of them. "Like St. Paul parting with his disciples," Madame Duchesne wrote. The children clung to her weeping, and many of the mothers also. The captain of the boat was at last obliged to insist on her coming away. The Curé of Fleurissant and several other persons were waiting at La Charbonnière on the other side of the Missouri.

Madame Duchesne thus describes their transit: "Sister Octavie and two of our pupils next embarked. I was to close the march in the evening with Sister Marguerite, the cows and the hens. But the cows were so indignant at being tied and the heat so great, that we were obliged to put off our departure to the cool hours of the morning. Then by dint of cabbages, which we had taken for them in the cart, they were induced to proceed. I divided my attention between the reliquaries and the hens. We crossed the Missouri opposite Fleurissant. On landing, Marguerite and I drew up our charges in a line, she the cows and I the hens, and fed them with motherly solicitude. The Abbé Delacroix came on horseback to meet us. He led the way galloping after our cows when in their joy at being untied they darted into the woods."

The work at St. Charles had lasted only a year. "Its effect," Mgr. Dubourg said, "had been at any rate to overcome ignorant and long-standing prejudices against teaching

and educating young girls." "It takes time," he said, "to effect a complete change of ideas. But the number of foreigners who flock to this place accelerate this improvement, and the sight of the small number of pupils who have benefited by the zeal of these excellent nuns strikes even the most careless observers. Now they would all like to send their daughters to such a school. If this can ever be the case what a change we should see in the lives of this population."

It was for such a transformation that Madame Duchesne was going to labour in her new residence. At St. Charles, with unspeakable trouble, she had just broken the ground and sowed the seed. One day the Sacred Heart was to return to that place and to gather in the harvest she had prepared. This was always her part of the work in our Lord's vineyard. Others reaped where she had conquered the soil inch by inch. She opened the way amidst brambles and briars. She was in the desert the pioneer of Christ.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Madame Duchesne at Fleurissant. Her hospitality. The School. The Novitiate. Struggles and Victory of the Sacred Heart. Its first Novices.*

1819—1821.

Fleurissant, or Florissant, was eight miles from St. Charles and fifteen from St. Louis; an immense prairie separated this village from the latter city. The savage tribe of the Sioux used to encamp upon this plain; its assemblage of huts was called Notaqua. Towards the beginning of the century European labourers commenced to till it, and in 1805 Fleurissant began to be called the granary of St. Louis. Its corn was in request throughout the whole of Missouri, and conveyed by water to the markets of Lower Louisiana.

This country has now in summer the appearance of a sea of verdure studded with oaks of various sorts, walnut-trees, planes, and all kind of forest trees, amongst which stand a number of pretty houses and ornamental villas, but in 1820 not a single cabin was to be seen between St. Louis and Fleurissant, nothing but a boundless expanse of waving grass, and, to complete the resemblance of this green plain with the ocean, storms often swept over it with sudden violence.

The Spanish colonist, who had originally drawn the plan of this village, had given it the name of St. Ferdinand, in honour of the sovereigns of his country, and it is often so called in Madame Duchesne's correspondence. A little

church had been built there, under the shadow of which a band of Trappists, driven away from France by the Revolution, had taken shelter, and remained there till 1812. The curé of this place, M. Dunand, was the last survivor of this little community, and he was still known in the village as the Father Prior. He had undertaken to arrange the humble abode which the nuns were to occupy, but as it was not yet finished they had at first to live in a farm which the Bishop had bought in the midst of a wild solitude, surrounded by forests. The Rev. M. Delacroix resided there, and directed the tillage and cultivation of the neighbouring land. He was the priest who had come on horseback to meet the Sisters at the river side. A Belgian by birth, he had been one of those faithful and brave Seminarists of Ghent whom Napoleon had forced into his army. He had acquired in that way a military spirit which had predisposed him for an apostolic life. Accordingly when Mgr. Dubourg made an appeal for missionaries for Louisiana, Charles Delacroix was one of the very first who had asked to be enrolled in his band of apostles. He was a true labourer in the vineyard of the Lord; bold and dangerous conquests were his delight. He soon plunged into the wild regions north of the Missouri, where the black robes had never yet ventured. Simple as a child and valiant as a soldier, M. Delacroix was afraid of nothing; he dreaded neither the floods nor the depths of the forests swarming with serpents and wild beasts, nor the pathless deserts he had to travel through at night. In all dangers his shield was the Sign of the Cross, and he had an unbounded confidence in the angels. On entering into any negotiations he took care before speaking to the persons he had to treat with to pray to their guardian angels, and experience had proved to him that this expedient always succeeded. The Bishop used to call him "his angel." And he had indeed an angelic love of God, and an activity in

His service which made him fly wherever work was to be done for religion.

The nuns were immediately struck with the wonderful self-devotion of this good priest. "When we arrived at our little home," Madame Duchesne says, "I found out to my great sorrow that M. Delacroix had left his own abode in order to give it up to us, and that he was living in a hut like a birdcage. It was one of the cabins made of matting, in which the emigrants hung up the maize to dry. M. Delacroix crept into it through a small opening which was at the same time a door and a window, and there was so little space inside that it did not hold even a chair.

The draughts were such that the holy missionary was soon laid up with a fever. The Bishop then ordered a better abode to be built for him, and in eight days a room, a really good one, was provided by means of old planks fastened together. And without great expense a chapel was also constructed, in which the Blessed Sacrament could be reserved. Then the nuns, as Madame Duchesne said, were quite happy, "for to possess our Lord is to have all we can desire." It was a poor abode indeed for Jesus Christ; during several days there were no windows in the chapel, and large holes in the woodwork, so that the apples in the loft sometimes fell into the little sanctuary. But their spiritual consolations were as great as their poverty.

The convent was a farm, and they lived as farm servants, looking after the cattle, milking the cows, which often in the midst of the process ran away from them into the forest, sowing and reaping maize, or cultivating vegetables. It was quite a piece of luck for the little community when in their walks in the wood they found a little fruit. They lived for some months on a small bull salted and a provision of flour bought on credit. Firewood was scarce, and every visit they received exhausted their stock. "In this country," Madame Duchesne said, "people laugh at

little fires such as those we have in Paris," and so after burning their remaining logs in honour of a visitor, the nuns had to go into the forest and by dint of labour renew their store.

In the midst of all this hard work Mother Duchesne wrote that her daughters and herself were full of overflowing joy. On the 21st of November, the anniversary of the foundation of the Society, she wrote this grateful and happy letter to Mother Barat: "My heart is always with you, and the two Societies are one in the Heart of Jesus. When I think that I belong to them my soul is overwhelmed with gratitude, and I can scarcely restrain my tears. I see nothing but happiness in all our privations. Could God grant me greater favours? Nothing but martyrdom would exceed in blessedness what I have received. But on my side, alas! how ill I have corresponded with grace! I place myself at your feet, dear Reverend Mother, in the Heart of Jesus!"

The Bishop used to laugh when he saw the nuns engaged in their homely labours, and asked Madame Audé if it was at Napoleon's court she had learnt to milk the cows. Madame Duchesne's courageous cheerfulness was a direct gift from God, for she had found no one in that country, not even Mgr. Dubourg or M. Richard, to whom she could speak quite unreservedly. In her there were so to speak two hearts, a tender and ardent one for Jesus Christ, the Church, and the salvation of souls, which was a subject of admiration to the servants of God, and an austere, mortified, and penitential one, which gave her goodness a somewhat severe aspect, and inspired at first more esteem than sympathy. Mgr. Dubourg wrote to Mother Barat that Madame Duchesne was a real saint, but that she had not quite enough of the suavity of St. Francis of Sales. Madame Duchesne felt on her side that she had not made a favourable impression on Mgr. Dubourg. "This

was the best thing that could have happened," she wrote, "in a place where I had so ardently desired to come, and where I should have been too happy if my Bishop had been more favourably disposed towards me. *God alone* and the *Ita Pater* have a real meaning in a position where I never feel forsaken by Divine Providence. It seems to encompass me about, as if I touched it with my heart and my hands." And a little later in another letter she says: "I have no longer any consolations; my heart longs for some support, and finds none but in God. In my anxiety for spiritual aid I thought of Mgr. Flaget, the Bishop of Bardstown, but he never came, and then again of the holy M. de Andreis, the Provincial of the Lazarists, but he is ill. So I must remain with *God alone*, my soul never having been able to open itself to any one since I left France."

M. Delacroix having been sent on a mission to the Gasconade, M. de Andreis came to replace him. This was a consolation for Madame Duchesne, who said of him and Mgr. Flaget, "They are both of them universally looked upon as saints, and God blesses visibly their ministry."

Felix de Andreis was a Piedmontese priest. He was teaching theology in Rome in the house of his Order at Monte Citorio with great talent and eloquence, when Mgr. Dubourg on his way through Italy enrolled him amongst his missionaries for Louisiana. He afterwards made him his Vicar-general. He was an apostle and also a mystic. In his earliest childhood, as he was wont to relate, heavenly contemplations were his delight, and the hymns which one of his aunts used to sing to him about God and the Blessed Virgin threw him into ecstasies of delight. He was himself a poet, and wrote verses on his guardian angel. Later on he studied with devout ardour the writings of St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross. His

mind was highly cultivated; he was equally versed in sacred and earthly lore, and besides Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, knew well the French and Spanish languages. He could have aspired to the highest ecclesiastical dignities, but solitude was his attraction, and nothing but his ardent zeal for souls could have drawn him out of retirement. A little book entitled *God alone* definitively engaged him in apostolic work, and his greatest wish was to die for the greater glory of God. With this hope he had joined the foreign missions, but never lost the spirit of silent intercourse with his Heavenly Father. Everything that spoke of God delighted him. Madame Duchesne relates that one day at the farm Mgr. Dubourg asked Madame Octavie to sing the hynm Father Barat had composed in honour of the name of Mary, and she adds, "Our good saint was present, and he nearly afforded us the repetition of what took place when St. John of the Cross fell into an ecstasy whilst St. Theresa and her Carmelites were singing. He turned first red and then pale, trembled, clung to his chair, fell down upon it, and burst into tears. . . . He so enjoyed the solitude of the woods that he always says that the happiest time he had known in America was here. The songs of Sion sung in these deserts enraptured him. Along the Ohio he had taken pleasure in making the air resound with the names of Jesus and of Mary in places where they had never been heard before."

Some of the pupils of the House of St. Charles had been brought by the nuns to the farm at Fleurissant. "People are so accustomed," Madame Duchesne said, "to be badly lodged in this country, that the most wealthy families do not mind letting us have their children." The care of these little girls, a retreat preached by M. de Andreis, and work in the fields filled up the time spent at the farm. At the end of December, 1819, the Curé of Fleurissant wrote to Madame Duchesne that the holy land was ready

and would be open to them at Christmas. She went there early in the morning on the 21st of December, and thus describes her arrival: "The first thing I heard was the bell ringing for Mass. I went at once to the church. The words of the Missal reminded me that that day was the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle. It gave me a thrill of joy to think that we were taking possession of our new abode on such a day. We begged of St. Thomas, St. Francis Xavier, and St. Francis Regis to obtain that this foundation might be one after their own hearts."

On the 23rd and 24th the other nuns, wrapped up in blankets, shivering with cold and covered with icicles, arrived, driving before them their cattle and walking knee deep in snow, without any other indication as to the road than the footsteps of the pigs and other animals. "The cold," Madame Duchesne wrote, "deprived us almost of the power of motion. Having tried in vain to lead with a rope one of our cows, I hoped to make her follow us out of her own inclination by filling my apron with maize with which I tried to tempt her on. But she preferred her liberty, and ran about the fields and brushwood, where we followed her, sinking deep into the snow and tearing our habits and veils amidst the bushes. At last we were obliged to let her have her own will and make her way back to the farm. I carried in my pocket our money and papers, but the strings broke, and everything, including a watch, fell in the snow. The wind having blown the snow on my gloves, they were frozen on my hands, and I could not take hold of anything. Eugénie had to help me to pick up my bag and also my pockets, which I was obliged to carry under my arm."

They lost their way, and did not reach their home till very late on Christmas Eve. "The room intended for a chapel was emptied of the logs of wood which filled it, sheets were hung up on the walls, an altar speedily erected,

the evening was spent in this work and in arranging it, and going to confession. At midnight M. Delacroix celebrated Mass—all those in the house were present—the workmen employed in the building came also to the chapel and went to Communion. They were good pious men."

The construction of the house of the Sacred Heart was the last work of the venerable Trappist, Mary Joseph Dunand. He had accompanied the Abbé de l'Estrange, when the latter emigrated to America and was sent by him to Kentucky and Illinois, where he had built two houses, which had been destroyed by fire and various calamities. After having travelled through deserts, braved the dreadful conflagrations of the Savannahs, narrowly escaped the attacks of serpents and wild beasts, he set himself with the same energy to struggle against vices more intractable than wild animals. His parishioners adored him. But always sighing after the solitude of his earlier life, the Father Prior longed to return to his beloved cloister of La Trappe, and accordingly in the month of May of the following year he embarked for France.

It is easy to see the hand of Providence in the settlement of Madame Duchesne's little colony in the midst of this solitude. In the first place Fleurissant, from the fact that the Bishop had a farm there, was the headquarters of all the missions of Louisiana and Missouri. The priests scattered over those wide regions came there to take a little rest and to receive directions as to new undertakings. Madame Duchesne immediately felt that it was the business of the Sacred Heart to receive and assist them, and eagerly and generously she set about it.

"This hospitality," she wrote to the Mother General, "of course entails expense and loss of regularity, but I comfort myself with the thought that these poor priests, worn out as they are with toil, find a little good air and rest at Fleurissant, where no one can receive them but

ourselves. It is moreover part of my vocation, as I used to tell you before leaving France: 'If I did nothing but cook for the priests I should be satisfied.'"

It was indeed by depriving itself of everything that the community could give a little. In the same letter Madame Duchesne says: "There was a moment this month when I had in my purse only six sous and a half, and debts besides." And another time she said: "We do not mind poverty as far as we are concerned—a true, humbling and despised sort of poverty is most like that of our Lord, and we welcome it as a gift from the Heart of Jesus. This is, I assure you, the feeling of your daughters in Louisiana. It is debt which harasses the soul."

These debts increased to such a degree that at last their creditors threatened to seize the house and expel the nuns. But Providence intervened, and donations sent from France by the Mother General, Madame Geoffroy, Madame de Marbeuf, Madame de Gramont d'Aster, and also by Madame de la Grandville and Madame de Rollin, saved the little shattered bark from shipwreck.

"I am so ashamed of all the trouble we give and of all we cost our friends, that I could almost regret my persistent efforts to come here, if it was not that I am still convinced that it is God's will we should be here."

They all were of the same mind, forgetting themselves and blessing that Divine will in the midst of all they had to suffer. Madame Berthold wrote to the Mother General: "We are very happy in our little brick-built house. In Madame Duchesne we have an example of every virtue, and in spite of what I suffer in being separated from you, I shall not cease courageously to renew each day the sacrifice once made and for ever . . . do I not wear on my breast the words, '*Cor unum et anima una.*' Fleurissant, Paris, Amiens, St. Acheul, &c., are all comprised in that dear motto. Thousands of miles, the ocean and the Mississippi

can occasion no separation in the adorable centre of our Lord's Sacred Heart."

A short time afterwards Madame Duchesne said: "We all persevere in the hope that we shall one day be well established in this country. But for the moment it is difficult to see beyond the present darkness. At any rate, we find that there can be happiness amidst much suffering. We are all pleased with our destination, we have no regrets or misgivings, and are resolved to abide in peace even in the midst of failure."

She showed how thoroughly this was her feeling when her brother soon afterwards offered to send her money in order to bring her back to France. "Tell him," she said, "that I beg of him to give that sum for the travelling expenses of two more nuns for Louisiana." Like a brave sentinel she was resolved that nothing should make her daughters and herself desert their post. Patiently and gladly, though in a state bordering on destitution, through the burning summers and icy winters, there they would remain till victory or death crowned their efforts.

The hospitable labours in which they were engaged did not hinder the work of education. Nor was the solitude in which they lived a disadvantage to their school. Though the distance from a city was in some respects a drawback, Fleurissant had the advantage of being cooler than St. Louis, less molested by insects, and less disturbed by visitors coming to take children out. In the month of May, 1820, Madame Audé wrote home that they had twenty-one scholars, and that half of them were Children of Mary. "Our children get on much better here than at St. Charles," Madame Duchesne said; and in another letter related acts of courageous humility, which she could not speak of without admiration. One girl, for instance, had of her own accord knelt down in the refectory before all her school-fellows to ask forgiveness of one of her companions for

having said something against her. Another tried hard to imitate St. Aloysius Gonzaga. Another strove to emulate the zeal of St. Francis Xavier. They had each a patron saint as their model, and aimed at making Fleurissant a little heaven upon earth. They had also some Protestant pupils, who seemed well inclined towards Catholicism. But Madame Duchesne showed great prudence in leaving these young girls free to act in a matter of such importance with perfect liberty.

Soon afterwards a letter was written by one of the pupils to Madame Barat, which was signed by sixteen of her companions. It contained these words: "Dear Reverend Mother, pray for us. Offer us to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and beg Him to keep us so closely attached to It that we may never leave It." At the head of the list were the names of Mathilda Hamilton and her sister Eulalie. No one knew at the time how exactly this desire was to be fulfilled in the case of these two young girls. Now that the school was beginning to flourish, Madame Duchesne began to think of establishing a novitiate. She was encouraged in this object by the example of a congregation founded in that country by a holy widow whose virtues she venerated. Describing the good which those nuns did at Philadelphia, New York, and in Kentucky, she says: "Their mother-house contains fifty religious and novices, and sixty pupils. They follow the rules of the Sisters of Charity, and wear a dress somewhat like ours." It was the saintly Elizabeth Seton that she alluded to. This admirable woman had died in the month of January, 1821; just ending her mission in the United States as Madame Duchesne was beginning hers, and bequeathing to her an example she longed to follow.

From Paris also the formation of a novitiate was continually urged upon her. The Superior General was always reminding her that it was absolutely necessary that the first house in America should become a mother-house, and that

the mission should be self-supporting. And Madame Duchesne was quite of the same mind, for we find her writing to Mother Theresa: "Pray that God may send us subjects in this country; for if we were always to expect them from France, the dangers and the expense of the journey, and the difficulty for foreigners to bear this climate, would always limit us to a small number."

But if the establishment of an American novitiate was on the one hand of primary importance for the life and perpetuity of the foundation, it was also attended with all but insurmountable difficulties. The Bishop felt it when he wrote: "It would be premature to reckon for the present on American vocations. If some such did present themselves in this place, it would require a long time to mature them, and still more to make them really useful. In fact it would be fatal to encourage for the present such ideas amongst the pupils. We must wait until the education of a great number of young ladies has removed the prejudices against the religious state."

The strongest of these prejudices arose, he thought, from the character of the Americans, which revolted against the idea of a vow of obedience, and whose ideas of equality militated against the fundamental distinction in the Institute between Choir-sisters and Lay-sisters. "It will be very difficult," Madame Duchesne said, "to make that distinction here. Of course there must always be inequality in fact on account of the difference of ability and education, and consequently of occupations. But to tell a postulant here that she is expected to *serve*, is a thing they would never hear of." It was hard to make them understand that the service required of them was in fact the service of Jesus Christ, and that to serve Him is to reign, as the Church expresses it.

This was an apparently insurmountable obstacle—a sort of impregnable fortress in the way of the Society of the

Sacred Heart. It had to be stormed, and a battle to be engaged. One of those strange battles, such as we shall have to describe more than once in this history. Like all those the Church has ever waged, it is in infirmity that strength has been found, gain through loss, and victory in the midst of defeat.

The Mother General kept encouraging them in these painful struggles by predicting that however prolonged the fight might be the triumph was certain. "Be full of courage and trust, my dear Philippine," she wrote. "This trying time will pass away, and what you have sown in tears you will reap with joy." And in another letter: "Our Society was founded on the Cross, your house must share in that privilege, and as it is the first founded in America, I foresee for it many trials. But know that Jesus will be with you, for it is for Him you suffer."

Madame Duchesne responded to these exhortations in the same spirit. She wrote to a friend: "Tell our good Mother not to be anxious about us. That holy M. Richard says we shall succeed. I have more faith in his words than in those of worldly people who predict the contrary."

On the feast of the Mother General she sent her in the name of the whole community lines written by Madame Berthold:

No, never for one instant deem,
That mean regrets my soul can fill;
You read my heart and well you know,
The martyrs' palm it covets still.
And in exchange for that dear crown,
For which I pray and sigh in vain,
God sends a joy I can't describe,
A deep, a strange, and blessed pain.
In these wild forests I discern
Nothing but beauty, for the wood
Of the true Cross abounds and yields
Many a sharp and holy rood.
Long live the Sacred Heart of Christ!
The Home beyond expression sweet,
Where the old world and the new world,
France and America, shall meet.

These strange and blessed sufferings, predicted, offered up, and accepted, began a few weeks afterwards. Each had her special cross. In the first place Madame Duchesne fell dangerously ill. In September, 1820, her whole body was covered by a kind of erysipelas followed by a bilious fever, which in a few days became so severe as to threaten her life. Mother Audé wrote as follows to Mother Barat: "I cannot help shuddering still at the thought of the critical state she was in for a week. Bitter and sad days indeed for your poor children, whose only resource was to throw themselves into the Heart of Jesus, and to repeat every moment in the extremity of their anguish the words, *Ita Pater*. We wrote to the Bishop, who arrived when she was at the very worst. He brought with him a second physician, who employed energetic means. For our part we only hoped in the mercy of the Heart of Jesus. We prayed harder than ever, and the Bishop offered up Mass in honour of St. Francis Regis. He never showed us so much kindness as on this occasion, and was like a Father who could only find consolation in comforting his children. He promised to be always our most faithful friend and support. After spending two days with us he was obliged to return to St. Louis on pressing business, and left us with regret."

Madame Duchesne recovered; and fully aware that she had narrowly escaped death, wrote accordingly to the Mother General: "I have had an illness which, including the time of recovery may be said to have lasted two months. I received the last sacraments, and was never so near the sight of God. After all the ardent desires I have felt to be with Him, at the moment when I could hope soon to possess Him, I could think only of the nothingness of my works, the strictness of God's judgments, and the emptiness of my heart." She expressed also in this letter her gratitude to the young doctor who had devoted himself

to his patient with filial attention and disinterestedness. But it was chiefly to the Divine Physician that she hastened to offer up her thanks. Her eagerness to seek His presence went beyond her strength, for Madame Audé wrote that one very cold day, when she was still so weak that she could hardly move, Madame Duchesne had taken advantage of her absence to dress herself and go down to the chapel, which was a perfect ice-house. She remained there until faintness overcame her, and Madame Audé expressed her fears lest by some imprudence of this sort they should lose their beloved Mother, who, she says, "will listen to nothing but her fervour."

No sooner was Madame Duchesne on the way to recovery, than Madame Octavie broke her arm, and was confined to her bed for forty days with a burning fever, attended by delirium. Madame Audé moreover was completely knocked up, and very weak. "Would to God," she wrote, "that the Sun of Justice would shine on my heart and ripen it for Heaven, so that it might no longer be subject to the destructive influence of pride. The idea of such a hope gives me a thrill of joy. Oh, why am I left to linger in a world where I have no real love of Jesus! where I only care for myself. Ask for me that I may be consoled by loving Jesus, and especially that I may know how to suffer for His love."

In the midst of all these trials, the little community had the sorrow of losing M. de Andreis, who had been both an example and a father to them. "The Bishop and we too," Madame Duchesne wrote, "have undergone a great loss, that of M. de Andreis, the Superior of the Lazarists and Vicar-General. He was great, both as to sanctity and learning, and with singular gifts for the care of souls. A malignant fever carried him off just as I was getting better. All the population of St. Louis, Protestants and Jews included, followed him to the grave with the most sincere

grief. He is supposed to have already wrought several miracles."

But another special victim was at a distance even then offering up her life at Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut to obtain that vocations might be found for the work of the American Mission. Aloysia Jouve no longer hoped to serve them in any other way than by her sufferings. Madame Barat wrote at that time to her aunt: "What grieves me most is the approaching death of our Aloysia, that angel of virtue. We are in deep affliction; pray for her and for us." Madame Duchesne, who had obstinately clung to hope, began to speak only of resignation. "Aloysia," she asks, "is then really worse? We must imitate her resignation; but it is a hard trial to me. I wish she was here." She soon perceived that God required at her hands this immense sacrifice, and before the news had reached her of the death of that beloved niece, she wrote: "Mother Theresa tells me that Aloysia is in her last agony. Alas, we who are here, and who have crossed the ocean, can only hope to see our friends in Heaven. It is there I see them all."

So many afflictions were winning graces from God. Prayer can do much, but suffering far more. Thanks to that powerful weapon, the struggle was drawing to a close, victory was at hand, and already God was holding out the promised reward. In the midst of the great trials of that painful autumn of 1820, Madame Duchesne was beginning to discern signs of vocation in several of the pupils. She wrote in her Journal: "Eulalie Hamilton, Emilie Saint-Cyr, and the orphan Mary Anne Summer all show a wish to become nuns."

But the first to break through the rampart and lead the van of those vocations was a young girl belonging to the mission of Barreins at Bois Brulé, one of the most fervent parishes of the Missouri. One day M. Rosati, who was at the head of it, and some other priests who were supping at

Fleurissant, told Madame Duchesne that every Sunday they had more than sixty Communions, and on Saturday about twenty, often more men than women. In the whole parish eight persons could hardly have been found who did not communicate at least once a month. And the village had no public-houses or dancing-rooms, so common in other localities. A simple good girl, called Mary Layton, had come to Fleurissant from this place. She had no education, was not even able to read, but, on the other hand, she was full of courage and love of God. Though not more than twenty years of age, she had made up her mind to belong to the Sacred Heart, and utterly indifferent to the national prejudices, offered herself as a Lay-sister. This generous postulant received the habit on the 22nd of November, St. Cecilia's feast. It was a few weeks after Madame Duchesne's illness, and almost immediately after M. de Andreis' death. Madame Duchesne was delighted, and thus describes the great event: "On this happy day those of our pupils who have a talent for music sung the Mass, and very well too. The altar was still adorned with the decorations of the preceding day, the feast of the Presentation in the Temple, on which we had all renewed our vows. We took advantage of this to celebrate in a becoming manner the first clothing that had taken place in Upper Louisiana since the beginning of the world, and great was our joy to see there one more victim of the Sacred Heart." And it was indeed in the true spirit of sacrifice that Sister Mary Layton entered the Order. She went straight from the splendour of this reception to her menial labours in the stable. Madame Duchesne wrote to the Mother General: "Our novice perseveres in the practice of the deepest humility. It is wonderful what she goes through in leading the cows through the snow, mud, and ice, often exposed to a pouring rain or to a cold wind, which almost paralyses the limbs. She had the other day

to cut the milk with a knife and a hammer, as if it had been sugar. And yet this winter is not so cold as that of last year."

The obstacles to a religious vocation having been surmounted by this devoted girl, others eagerly followed her example, and joined the Order as choir nuns as well as Lay-sisters.

On the 19th of March, feast of St. Joseph, Mdlle. Emilie Saint-Cyr took the veil, and also Sister Summer. But two other vocations which followed close upon these seemed to Madame Duchesne in a still more especial manner the result of her dear Aloysia's sacrifice and intercession.

In the first place Eulalie Hamilton took the veil on the first Friday of May, 1821, and the name of Regis, which for fifty years this holy nun has borne in constant fidelity and devotion to God's service. Her sister Mathilda, who had asked Madame Barat the year before to pray that she might never abandon the Sacred Heart, was the next to join the Society. The family of these two novices came from Maryland, and had settled at Kaskaskias in Upper Louisiana. It was in their house that the French missionaries learnt English and enjoyed a charitable hospitality, which God rewarded by many signal blessings, and amongst others, by the vocations of the two sisters Eulalie and Mathilda. In the case of Eulalie, all was plain sailing. She passed from the school into the novitiate. Mathilda went through greater trials. She was Father Joseph Dunand's godchild. Her grandmother, Mrs. Fenwick, an admirable woman, had given her in childhood lessons and examples of the most solid virtue. It was in her school-days at the farm of Fleurissant, where she was directed by the saintly M. de Andreis, that she began to hear the voice of God calling her to a religious vocation. But on her return to the world and its allurements, she would

have been tempted to turn aside from her high calling if our Lord had not constrained her, as it were, to abandon it and follow Him. Madame Duchesne noted that her final resolution to embrace the religious life was made just at the moment of Aloysia's holy death. She was on the point of embarking for Europe, when Father Dunand, who arrived at that moment, reminded her of her vocation, and persuaded her family to let her return to the Sacred Heart. She arrived there on the eve of her young sister Eulalie's clothing. The sight of her clothing made so deep an impression on Mathilda's soul, that she declared her resolution to give herself to God for life and death. On the 16th of June, 1821, she received the veil from Mgr. Dubourg's hands, and took the name of Xavier, out of love for the Apostle of the Indies. During her postulantship she had written an abstract of his life, and Madame Duchesne found in her character some resemblance with the great Apostolic Saint.

She had to go through great struggles during her novitiate. Madame Duchesne thus describes her: "Our Sister Mathilda is very pleasing in looks and manner; she has a manly spirit, a generous soul, and a capability for great sacrifices. She has had much trouble to overcome the strength of her natural affections, self-indulgence, and self-esteem. That last enemy especially excited many a storm in her naturally proud heart and independent mind. God allowed her to go through great trials, dislike to her Superiors, jealousy of her Sisters, anger at her own faults, temptations against the faith, and a sort of despair, which made her wish to put an end to her life. But her courage and her faith gained the victory over all these evil dispositions. She was perfectly indifferent as to food and clothing, and afflicted her body with irons, chains, and such severe disciplines that when they were discovered, she was commanded to moderate her penances. When suffering most

from interior trials and temptations she was always amiable and submissive, and never gave way to any expressions of discontent."

Madame Duchesne, in her joy and gratitude at these vocations, loved to ascribe them to the oblation her niece had made of her life. She had just died, and from that moment vocations began to abound. Speaking of Mathilda's clothing, she said: "I required that consolation for Aloysia's death." The details of this young and holy nun's end comforted her also for so immense a loss. She wrote in the fulness of her heart to Father Barat and the Mother General how deeply she had been touched by the description of her niece's saintly end, adding, in her profound humility: "She had left me far behind, both as to virtue and its reward. Her short but so well filled existence makes me feel more strongly the worthlessness of mine, and the abuse of so many graces, in spite of which I remain still so imperfect and so immortified. The more I think of them, the more they astonish and terrify me. Above all, the privilege of belonging to the Society to which I gave Aloysia. May her merits hide my defects, and obtain that I may yet make up for the past."

To her sister, Madame Jouve, she wrote: "Yes, I venture to call you a happy mother; for what you suffer from the loss of your daughter cannot equal the consolation of giving saints to God, religious to the Church, and heavenly protectors to all your family."

Such examples as these and the vocations of the two Hamiltons gave such an impulse towards the Sacred Heart in the school, that the Bishop thought it necessary to impress upon the nuns the necessity of great prudence on this point. "His lordship says that we are not to give the children anything to read that would influence them to remain with us; the parents are becoming anxious about it. He says that if any of our pupils express desires for the

religious life, we are to tell them that they must at all events go home first, and test their vocations."

But whilst obeying these injunctions, Madame Duchesne felt for the young creatures who had to stand the brunt of parental opposition, the allurements of worldly pleasures, the temptations of repeated offers of marriage, and foolish remarks. She also grieved for the children in the school "who unless they stifled their aspirations and kept silence as to their wishes, would have been immediately taken away." But she was at the same time beginning to see that the new world was not going to prove the barren land she had feared, and that it was amongst the American women that some of their best vocations would be found. "They are more pious than we are," she said, "when they are Catholics, and more constant in their resolutions."

She now thought of erecting at Fleurissant a monument of these first successes. "During my illness I felt sorry to die before I had erected a public oratory in honour of the Sacred Heart. I spoke of it to the Bishop, and he decided that the church he is going to build at Fleurissant should be dedicated to the Sacred Heart, and to St. Ferdinand only in a secondary manner." It was indeed a happy moment for Madame Duchesne when, on the 19th of February, 1821, she presented the first stone of that sanctuary to M. Delacroix, who placed in the foundation a document containing these words, "*Laudetur Jesus Christus.* On this 19th of February, I, Charles Delacroix, by the permission of our Very Rev. Bishop Valentin Louis Guillaume Dubourg, have laid the first stone of this church, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, under the invocation of St. Ferdinand and St. Francis Regis, Madame Duchesne, the Superior, presenting the first stone, and Madame Octavie Berthold, Madame Eugénie Audé, the other Sisters, the pupils of the school, and many of the inhabitants of the village being present." Thus were fulfilled Madame Barat's parting

words to her daughters: "If in the country where you are going you were to do no more than erect one altar to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, it would be enough for your happiness in eternity."

In her gratitude and devotion to St. Francis Regis, Madame Duchesne, not only wished him to be one of the patrons of the church, but she also asked the Bishop to place a statue of the saint in the sacred edifice. Mgr. Dubourg said that he did not possess one, but that if in a box he was expecting from Rome there should happen to be what she wanted, that he would make her a present of it. And it did turn out that, on opening the case, the first thing that appeared was a picture of the holy missionary at the point of death, with an angel supporting him, and showing him Heaven, where Jesus and Mary were about to receive him. This picture was placed in the chapel set apart for the nuns, and became the object of Madame Duchesne's special devotion.

These first successes had not really changed anything in the position of these courageous nuns, but they had cheered them for the present, and reanimated their hopes for the future. In the month of August, 1821, Madame Duchesne wrote to Mother Barat: "Our field of labour is still very small, but without us, the few persons to whom we devote ourselves here would never have known their religion and the adorable Heart of Jesus. We are not, therefore, in the least degree discouraged, and are determined to persevere. We none of us regret that we came, and all intend to live and die here. Far from being weary of our obscure life, we like it; we should be sorry to be more comfortable, and we laugh in the midst of our humble occupations more perhaps than worldly people do at their balls and parties. It is not, I assure you, from low spirits we suffer."

The question was how to go forward. The army of

missionaries was in full march over all Louisiana. Mgr. Dubourg, who had been kept away from New Orleans by some unhappy dissensions, had just returned there, and been enthusiastically received. "It is a triumph for religion," people wrote from thence to Madame Duchesne. "Our Bishop is received wherever he goes as the successor of the Apostles. Crowds go to meet him miles off on his road, and he is escorted to the church in the midst of the ringing of bells and firing of cannon. Everybody kneels as he goes by. He is perpetually blessing, preaching, and confirming."

The yellow fever, which raged at New Orleans at the end of the year, 1822, had brought about many conversions. The self-devotion of the priests had produced a wonderful effect. André Ferrari, a young Genoese Lazarist, highly remarkable for his talents, had died like a saint, a hero, and a martyr. In her own vicinity Madame Duchesne saw a magnificent cathedral built at St. Louis, and filled with a daily-increasing number of Catholics. And at the extremity of the diocese the tribe of the Osages had sent one of its chiefs to Mgr. Dubourg, the Father of the "Black Robes," to implore him to teach them the prayer of the Master of Life. "This is what troubles me most," Madame Duchesne wrote to Father Barat. "If one went amongst these savages, there would be some hope of martyrdom, if not at their hands, at those of the wild men who traffic with them." Two excursions of the chaplain of the Sacred Heart, M. Delacroix, to the land of the Osages had resulted in the baptism of more than forty Indians, children and old men, and given hopes of establishing a church there.

Mgr. Dubourg's plan was to erect log houses from distance to distance as churches for the new Christians, and residences for the missionaries, who were to live on the produce of the land.

This was more than enough to re-awaken all Madame

Duchesne's zeal, and to make her dream of future conquests.

On the 15th of August, 1821, she wrote to Mother Barat: "I thought I had attained to the height of my ambition, but I feel burning with the desire to go into Peru. Still I am more reasonable in my wishes than in France, where I tormented you with my vain desires."

The Mother General had ruled that before proceeding to new foundations, it was necessary that America should furnish subjects to the Society. This condition was now fulfilled, and it was therefore possible to act. Mother Barat wrote that she was sending from Paris three more missionary Sisters, who, with the new recruits at Fleurissant, afforded a reinforcement which favoured the idea of a new foundation. The Sacred Heart was taking root in Louisiana, and there was now no fear that extension would endanger its future.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Foundation of the house at Grand Coteau. Mrs. Smith's donation. Mother Audé's works and zeal. Arrival of Mothers Mathevson and Murphy.*

1821—1822.

M. DE TOCQUEVILLE said that if he was asked to what he principally ascribed the remarkable prosperity and increasing greatness of the American people, he would ascribe it to the superiority of their women.

It is possible, and we do not wish to deny that the present state of America may justify this opinion; but at the time we are describing it is certain that, at any rate, the women of Louisiana were ignorant to a degree which grieved and surprised the pastors of the Church.

Mgr. Dubourg wrote thus to Mother Barat: "The deep ignorance which has resulted from the neglect in which the population of Louisiana has been left, rendered it at first very difficult to make it rightly estimate the advantage of education. The women of even the most wealthy families have been brought up in complete apathy of mind and heart, and can hardly appreciate the importance of a good education for their daughters. You can therefore imagine in what an uncivilized state are those of the lower classes."

On this account, and as a remedy to so great an evil, the Bishop urged Madame Barat to multiply educational institutions in his large diocese, hoping, as he did, that a complete change amongst the women would be the result of the education given at the Sacred Heart.

The almost triumphant reception he had met with in lower Louisiana had confirmed this hope, and moreover, the foundation of a new school had been proposed to him, and with such advantageous conditions that he hastened to communicate it to Madame Duchesne.

Three hundred leagues below St. Louis, and about sixty from New Orleans, in a country called the Opelousas, a rich and pious lady offered a house and land to the Sacred Heart. The husband of this lady, Mr. Charles Smith, who came from Maryland, had established himself in 1803 in Louisiana. He had the happiness of seeing his wife, a Pennsylvanian and an Anabaptist, converted to the Catholic faith, and as eager as himself about all good works. Mr. Smith made a large fortune, purchased a considerable estate called "Le Grand Coteau," and built houses for his two brothers, whom he invited to live near him. He and his wife became the benefactors of that country, and began by building a church. The next thing they thought of was the establishment of houses of education for boys and for girls. Death overtook Mr. Smith before he could accomplish his purpose; but his widow, who inherited half his fortune, determined to carry out all his plans for the glory of God. Just at that moment Mgr. Dubourg came to the Opelousas. She disclosed to the holy Bishop her pious intentions, and asked his leave to found on her estate a religious house where young girls would be brought up, and she herself might retire and spend in peace her remaining days. It was, moreover, understood that the house and its furniture, as well as the expenses of the journey, would be provided for at Mrs. Smith's expense. Her gift was complete, and Mgr. Dubourg accepted with gratitude this generous proposal. He mentioned at once the nuns of the Sacred Heart, whose institute would, he said, entirely correspond with her views. He undertook to ask, and promised to obtain, the consent of the Superior General and Mother Duchesne.

Nothing could, of course, better answer the wishes of the latter, and she wrote to Madame Barat: "A hundred years might elapse before we received such another offer in a country like this." And in another letter she says: "The house will indeed be in the country, but in a most advantageous position for the cultivation of sugar. Our establishments at Fleurissant, the Opelousas, and later on, no doubt, at New Orleans, will cover the whole length of Louisiana." The ardent missionary thus sketched out a whole plan of campaign.

Madame Barat, after praying, consulting, and waiting a little, considered that this work would be according to God's will. Mother Duchesne, as usual, never thinking of herself, at once proposed to place Madame Eugénie Audé at the head of this new establishment. "As to myself," she adds, "you will place me where you like. I have lost the power of wishing for anything but to do the will of God. My last illness has confirmed me in this state of indifference."

Madame Audé, to whom she proposed to intrust the arduous task of organizing a new house of the Sacred Heart, was indeed well fitted for it by qualities which had been thoroughly tested. "God made her to be a Superior," Madame Duchesne said. There was no one in the community who had an equal power of attracting both Mothers and children. Her looks and her manners at once prepossessed every one favourably. There was a peculiar charm and great refinement in her thoughts and words; but it was her warmth and tenderness of heart which gave her so much influence. What she loved most in the world was Madame Barat, and, next to that dear Mother, her pupils. Her intense devotion to them which she subsequently evinced, and which made her brave contagion and death for their sakes, was the secret of that influence which those alone possess who feel deeply and speak from the

heart. She was named Superior of the new establishment, and Mother Barat wrote her a letter containing the following words: "My dear Eugénie,—We have all approved of your Rev. Mother's ideas, and I cannot but entirely sanction the foundation at the Opelousas. Pray often, my dear child, for her who is often thinking of you, especially since she knows what a task our Lord has committed to your zeal. Be full of courage and confidence. The Heart of Jesus will help you." In a subsequent letter she tells her that Madame Duchesne was to have over the house of the Opelousas a Provincial's authority. "We should have given her that title had it been in use amongst us. Consult her, therefore, about all immediate questions, and write to us only about difficult or important things."

On the 30th of July, 1821, the eve of the feast of St. Ignatius, it was arranged with Mgr. Dubourg that the foundress of the house of Grand Coteau would set out on the following Sunday with Sister Mary Layton, who was to be her only companion till the arrival of the nuns who were coming from France. At their departure Madame Duchesne, out of her poverty, insisted on giving her dear daughters a sum of about five hundred francs for their immediate necessities and the arrangements of the chapel.

The Bishop also gave them all he possibly could. "He wanted to make over to us everything in his house," Madame Duchesne said. The constitutions of the Society were of course amongst the contents of the Sisters' small trunk, and the most precious of their possessions. Short were the preparations, and on both sides great efforts were made to hide their tears. Mother Duchesne suffered most from this separation, for Madame Eugénie had been her right hand; but she was supported by the desire of extending their holy rule and devotion to the Sacred Heart.

It was on the 5th of August, at seven o'clock, a.m., that the departure took place, and at ten Madame Audé and

Sister Layton embarked on the *Rapid* and descended the Mississippi. All went on easily till they arrived at Plaquemine, but then began a series of adventures graphically described by Madame Audé. At ten o'clock in the evening they landed in the mud, found a dreadful specimen of an inn, and had to continue their journey in a cart, to re-embark again, and cross the arm of a river to the Attacapas. The rest of the journey had to be performed on horseback, an agitating process for two persons who had never ridden in their lives before. They were hospitably received at one place by a good old curé of seventy, who had been a Benedictine; but his establishment was of a strangely primitive description, and his ideas of their requirements peculiar.

At last, on the 25th, they arrived at Mrs. Smith's house, but Madame Audé was anxious as soon as possible to move to their own, in order to establish the regularity of religious life. On the 28th they accordingly took possession of it, though nothing was ready. For several nights they slept on the floor, with nothing but a sheet for bedding. She wrote at that moment to the Mother General: "Pray for me; to think that you are doing so is my only strength and comfort. The title of Spouse of the Sacred Heart and the feeling that I am one of your daughters makes all my happiness. I had rather suffer anything than forego these privileges. Bless your child, my dear Mother; when you say she belongs to you and that you belong to her in the Heart of Mary, all her trials vanish."

The establishment of Grand Coteau is about ten miles to the south-west of the Opelousas, in the parish of Saint Landry. What goes by the name of Grand Coteau is a ridge which overlooks the marshes and prairies, and stretches out as far as the Gulf of Mexico. This hilly ground is partly covered by primeval forests, where at that time the axe had made but little havoc. Water courses called

Bayous, offshoots of the Mississippi, intersect the fields and woods, with navigable means of communication, which lose their depth as they leave the neighbourhood of the great river, and end in marshes inhabited by alligators and caymans, where fire-flies sparkle over the undulating prairie.

"Nothing can be more majestic," one of the nuns writes, "than the aspect of this melancholy country. On one side we look on immense forests, the gigantic trees of which present an extraordinary variety of foliage and are generally covered with a greyish-green moss called Spanish beard. The most wonderful aquatic plants float on the pools and streams. Magnificent magnolias interweave their branches, and form with their broad leaves and large white flowers an impenetrable shelter against the sun's burning rays. Under these natural roofs the waters of the Bayous sleep, sometimes in light, sometimes in darkness, and then emerging from the depths of the wood, the traveller finds himself in a vast plain, stretching out into boundless space. The undulations of this wide expanse, the absence of trees, the green surface only diversified by millions of flowerets, remind one of the ocean. There is something about it which conveys the idea of infinity. Not a hedge, not a rock, not a gate limits the prospect; it is an interminable sheet of verdure; and now and then a mirage at a little distance completes the illusion by presenting an exact appearance of the sea.

Part of these naturally fertile tracts of land had been transformed into plantations of cotton and sugar canes. Mrs. Smith's estate was composed of two hundred and forty acres. The only habitations upon it were those of the emigrants and the planters, each of which formed in itself a sort of hamlet, comprising the master's house, both corn and sugar mills, cotton warehouses, an infirmary, and a number of small huts in a row divided by gardens and called the negroes' camp. There were from sixty to eighty of these plantations in the parish of St. Landry, a modest

little wooden church stood in the centre of them. M. Brassac, the curé, served also the parish of Alexandria, eighty miles further north, those of St. Martinville and Vermillonville to the south, and of Bayou-Chicot to the west. These four or five villages, which made up a population of about twenty thousand souls, were to furnish pupils to the school of the Sacred Heart.

The house which Mrs. Smith had built for the nuns covered a space of about fifty-five square feet. It was made of wood, and well constructed in the American fashion, painted inside and out, with a verandah around it, a poultry yard, an entrance court with some trees in it, a field for the cattle, and behind the house a large orchard, used as a play-ground for the children. The kitchen, dining-rooms, and infirmaries were as many small buildings of only one story. The situation of this house was so lonely that from the adjacent forests wolves sometimes approached it. A garden was laid out. "In our orchard," Madame Audé wrote, "we shall have a great many different sorts of fruit trees, figs and peaches in abundance. Sugar and coffee grow very well in this soil. But cotton and oxen are the staple articles of commerce. We look from hence on almost boundless prairies covered with oxen, cows, and horses, feeding in perfect freedom."

At the moment of their establishment a difficulty arose between Mrs. Smith and the nuns as to the conditions of her donation. She had reckoned that in consequence of her generous gift she would be allowed not only to reside in the house as a secular, but to live in it as a member of the community, sharing its mode of life, but unshackled by the rules or the obligations of the religious, and going in and out as she pleased. Whether Mgr. Dubourg had understood this or not when he concluded the arrangment for the nuns, they had never contemplated accepting a state of things which would have materially interfered with

regularity and independence. Madame Audé, following the advice of Mother Duchesne, decided that it would be better to sacrifice the foundation than to consent to such a breach of their rule; to express their gratitude, but humbly and quietly to retire. And in order to break the matter to Mrs. Smith, she said to her: "Dear lady, you know that the parents of seven or eight of our pupils have arranged to send them here on the 1st of October. Would you let them know that the school will not open so soon, and even that it is uncertain whether it will open at all." "What do you mean?" Mrs. Smith answered. "Do you not intend to continue your work?" Madame Audé took the good lady's hands in hers and said: "Dear kind friend, I feel that it would be too great a sacrifice for you to give up your own plan, but I grieve to say that it is not in accordance with our holy rule, and that we could not expect God's blessing on our work if we infringed it." Great was Mrs. Smith's agitation on hearing this. "Well, we shall see about it," she said. In the afternoon two priests came at her request to discuss the subject with Madame Audé, but did not succeed in changing her resolution. Negotiations went on for several months. At last a compromise was effected. Mrs. Smith contented herself with some reasonable concessions, and yielded the essential points.

The works of adaptation were prosecuted with great energy. Madame Audé carried them on with a zeal and activity which took by surprise those who had hitherto only observed the singular gentleness and refinement of her nature. The intentions of the generous benefactor were ill-seconded and sometimes defeated by those who acted for her. The poor Superior had not only to look after everything herself and to direct the masons, the house painters, and the carpenter, but literally to put her hand to many a rough and sometimes dangerous work. Once

for instance, when she was whitewashing the outer walls, she thrust her hand into a hole and felt the cold touch of a living animal. She withdrew her arm hastily, and an immense serpent rushed hissing out of the cavity. He was killed, and in his stomach a brood of young chickens was found, the loss of which had been a great grief to Sister Mary.

It could not be expected that trials would not attend the first days of this new establishment. The damp of the climate affected painfully the health of the religious. When the Sister was ill, the Superior had to go herself to fetch water from a source in the forest half a mile from the house. She herself soon began to suffer also, her swollen feet almost incapacitated her from moving, but she still went on watching over the works and crawling from room to room, to direct and push on the workmen. The end of it was that she was seized with a dangerous fever and felt as if death was approaching. The negroes often neglected her to such a degree that sometimes in her burning thirst she could not get a drop of water to drink. In her extremity she turned to her Divine Spouse, and asked the Abbé Brassac to bring her Holy Communion. When she had the Sacred Host in her mouth she felt a strong impulse to say to our Lord: "If Thou willest, Thou canst cure me, but I do not ask Thee to do it. I am in Thy hands and I wish to remain so." It seemed then as if our Lord said to her: "Dost thou think that My Heart can cure thy heart?" "Oh, yes! my dear Jesus," she answered; "I believe that Thy name, if I utter it with complete faith, can cure all my ailments." On that day the fever left her, and on the following one she was as strong as before her illness. So great was her happiness that she cried for joy, not so much at being cured, as at having received that blessing without any human means and from Jesus alone.

Madame Duchesne anxiously watched the course of events. She wrote about her dear daughter to M. Brassac, and received a letter which gave better accounts of her health. "Mrs. Smith," he added, "appreciates fully the treasure for which she is indebted to your clear foresight, and her most ardent prayers are addressed to Heaven for a blessing on the works and plans of your dear Sister. The parents of the children under her care are all unanimous in their expressions of satisfaction, and I have no doubt the school will succeed admirably. There have been difficulties at first, and there may still be some to overcome. But was there ever an undertaking for the glory of God which did not meet with obstacles?"

In the following letter Madame Audé describes the way in which she gained ground in spite of difficulties: "Jesus, and after Him our Mothers and our Sisters; these are the objects which we have continually before our eyes. They are the delights of my life and my only comfort in my cares." And some weeks afterwards she writes to Mother Barat: "I feel as if I had before me a canvas, on which I wished to make a small copy of a great picture even to its most minute shades, but I make sad work of it. Only let the painter come and in a charitable and experienced manner guide my faltering hand, adding and effacing so that the copy may perfectly resemble the original. The large picture is our dear Society, and the small copy the house of the Opelousas committed to poor Eugénie's care. Let the charitable painter be my dear Mother, who will efface and correct all that she finds amiss without ever meeting with the least resistance."

The Heart of Jesus was beginning to reign in the new establishment. A small log house had been built for the day scholars, and five children were received in the boarding-school. Born and brought up in the plantations, these little girls were entirely unaccustomed to European habits. When

they saw Mgr. Dubourg for the first time in his purple cassock, they ran away screaming, "A Spaniard! a Spaniard!" It was as if the house had been invaded by a new Cortez. Their ignorance of religion was so great that they did not understand the names of the Christian mysteries. If the nuns spoke to them of Hell, they asked: "Have you seen it?" One of them, a girl of fifteen, Mrs. Smith's niece, had been brought up a Presbyterian, and thought when she arrived that she should find her aunt kneeling before gold and silver gods. Madame Audé instructed and prepared her for baptism. So great were the graces of God in this young soul, that her mistress was often obliged to pause whilst she was teaching her, on account of the abundance of tears which contrition and love of God made her shed.

But this was only a beginning, and without a reinforcement it would have been impossible to carry on the work. According to Mother Barat's promise it came in the first instance from France. The vocations for the missions were multiplying in the mother-country. This was one of the blessed results of Madame Duchesne's example. Father Varin congratulated her upon it in the following words: "How happy and enviable your fate seems to me, my dear daughter. It must be a great and additional encouragement to you to hear that your Sisters in France are striving to emulate your zeal, and asking of our Lord and their Mother to be allowed to tread in your footsteps. I am obliged to comfort some of them by holding out hopes that their turn will come. How good God has been to you and your first companions in choosing you to open the way to all those whose mission it will be to propagate in the new world the holy and winning devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus." In a letter from Madame Barat, written on the 23rd of November, 1821, we find her saying: "Two only are going now, a great many of

our Sisters are intensely longing to set off, but before we can spare them others must be trained to supply their places."

The two new religious missionaries accepted for America were Madame Mathevon of the house at Grenoble and Madame Murphy from the Paris house.

Madame Mathevon, who has just ended in America her long apostolic life, had lost both her parents when she was placed under Madame Duchesne's care at Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut. It was the example of that holy nun which had been the means of inspiring her with a vocation for the missions, and throughout her life she was devoted to her. Active, zealous, and gifted with the power of adapting herself to every kind of position, Madame Mathevon possessed the very qualities most important for a missionary. "In a few years," Mother Barat wrote, Madame Lucile will be an excellent Superior for one of your houses. She has a most steady vocation, and an active, universal zeal. Moreover she is sensible as well as virtuous, and understands order and economy. She is a valiant woman, and has edified us during her stay in this house." The last words Mother Barat said to her were these: "My dear Lucile, I always had a great wish to go and teach the savages to know God and to love our Lord Jesus Christ, and it is you, my dear child, that I send instead of me." Madame Mathevon thought at that time that the whole of America was inhabited by savages, and did not understand till later on the prophetic meaning of these words which to her dying day she never forgot.

Her companion, Madame Murphy, was Irish. Her character was generous, amiable, and candid, and her mind highly cultivated. "She is more than thirty years of age," the Superior General wrote, "and will be very useful to Madame Eugénie for her school. The character of the Irish is very like our own, and they are very pleasing.

Moreover, nothing is an effort to her in the way of her vocation." Madame Murphy at the time of her departure took the name of Xavier in honour of the great Saint whose apostolic spirit she longed to imitate.

Madame Lucile Mathevon was sent to Fleurissant, where she arrived on the Monday after Low Sunday in 1822. Soon afterwards she wrote to the Mother General: "I cannot describe to you the happiness it gave me to see Mother Duchesne. Everything here touches and interests me. I feel that it is God's will I should be in this place. I wish for nothing but to do His will, and my greatest suffering is to be able to do so little for Him." Mother Duchesne was delighted at her arrival, and all the more so because she had supposed that Madame Mathevon was to be Superior instead of her. But Mother Barat destroyed this illusion. "How could you imagine," she wrote, "that Madame Lucile was to replace you. You are in the position where God wills you to be, that is Superior of your own house and also of Madame Audé's. This is quite necessary."

Madame Murphy was sent to Mother Audé, who spoke of her as a soul full of strong faith, "and it is such souls as these" she added, "that we want in America." This zealous Sister made her vows in the month of May. Mgr. Dubourg received them, and she wrote as follows to the Mother General: "When in making my vows I pronounced your name, I felt a strong and deep emotion which I hardly know how to describe, I knelt in spirit at your feet, and it seemed to me that you were embracing your poor daughter Xavier." During an illness she had a short time afterwards, her desire to belong for ever to Jesus was still further strengthened. She told Madame Audé that at Paris she kept often repeating, "America or death." "Well, now that you are here," Madame Audé answered, "you must say, 'To persevere or to die.'"

"That," Madame Murphy exclaimed, "is indeed the greatest and only desire of my heart." This was at a moment when she was suffering intensely in body and soul.

Grand Coteau soon supplied its share of recruits to the little band of missionaries. Two novices, Madame Gérard and Madame Carmelite Landry received the habit there, one of them on the feast of the Sacred Heart, and the other on St. Ignatius' day, July 31, 1822. Sister Mary Layton likewise made her vows on the feast of the Sacred Heart. Madame Audé wrote to Mother Duchesne that she was like soft wax in the hands of her Superiors, and worked indefatigably, waiting on the children at table, and eating her own dinner in any corner like a beggar. She adds that from the lips of this good Sister a murmur, a complaint, a word of opposition was never heard, and that all her religious were her joy and consolation by their self-devotion, obedience, and mutual charity. "'Yes, Reverend Mother!'" is their answer to everything I ask of them, and I know that this assent comes from their hearts."

Her duty and her feelings were both urging Mother Duchesne to visit the new foundation, which she had not yet seen. Especially since Madame Audé's illness she had been anxious to make this journey, and after the Bishop's return she found it was indeed necessary to visit and assist it. Mgr. Dubourg had been to the Opelousas, and he asked that two of the Sisters from the novitiate at Fleurissant, Madame Joséphine Saint-Cyr and Mary Mullamphy, should immediately be sent there. Mother Duchesne made up her mind to accompany them and take with her Miss Theresa Pratt, one of the pupils who was devotedly attached to Madame Audé. She started on this journey, foreseeing in it advantages for her mission and consolations for herself, and little aware of the tribulations which were to attend it, and to call forth all the heroism of her character.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Madame Duchesne's journey to Grand Coteau. Her visit to Madame Audé. Her return. The yellow fever. The great dangers she encounters.*

July to October, 1822.

We begin this chapter by transcribing Madame Duchesne's own description of her journey to the Opelousas in a letter to Mother Barat.

"We left St. Louis on the 20th of July, 1822, and made the journey with three priests, but they were not able to afford us any help on our way. The day after our departure, which was a Sunday, we had hoped to hear Mass at Sainte Geneviève, but the captain had to ship a cargo of lead at Herculaneum, and so we were obliged to stay there till the evening.

"God mercifully made up to us for this privation by a consoling little incident. We met two little girls of the country, who followed us with their dog on the banks of the river, where we had gone out to walk. Their father soon joined us, and asked if we were Roman Catholics. We said we were, and that he ought to have his children baptized in the true Church. He replied that the eldest had been, and that he wished the youngest could be baptized also. We called one of the priests who were travelling with us, and to the great joy of the parents he baptized the little girl. Our pupil stood godmother, and the priest promised that in the course of his missionary

travels he would every year visit this place, where very few Catholics lived at that time.

"On the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, we stopped at Sainte Geneviève, and there heard Mass and received Holy Communion. We offered it up in union with all those that are made in our Society for our dear Mother Barat. We spent Sunday, the 28th, at Natchez, where we dined with the curé, a young Flemish priest, M. Mano, whose health appeared to be failing more I think from grief than from excess of work. He had very few parishioners, and his small wooden church looked very poor in the midst of several fine Protestant places of worship. Crowds were going into the Presbyterian temple, which we were nearly entering by mistake. When we discovered the Catholic church it was with a heavy heart that we saw how few were coming to hear Mass."

Up to this time the travellers had got on well, even though they suffered much from the intense heat, and the bites of innumerable insects. But prepared, as they were, to endure every sort of trial, they rather complained than not of having so little to offer up to God. They spent their evening recreations on the deck singing hymns, in which a priest, who had a beautiful voice, used to join. His name was M. Dumoulin. He accompanied them as far as Bâton Rouge, of which he was the curé.

On the 29th, they left the river, and then began the really trying part of their journey. In the first place they had to remain seven days in a horrible inn at Plaquemine whilst the steamboat was refitting. The merciless extortions of the innkeeper and the demands of the drivers were only the prelude of what they were about to go through on the Bayous, or arms of the stream, which were so low at that moment as to be almost unnavigable. From one of these sort of canals they passed to another without any possibility of landing, for the soil, whence the water had only just

disappeared, was so slimy that the oxen sank into it up to the breast. "In spite of the fatigue of our rowers, we had to proceed in the boat, and out of a second Bayou we got into a third, which I can best describe by comparing it to what we read in mythology of the rivers of Tartarus. As far as we could see, black and fetid water bathed the edges of the most gloomy looking woods, which are only during one or two months of the year quite out of the water. At other times only the tops of the trees are visible, their dark foliage almost covered by huge creepers, which look like long muddy grey beards, and hang down from the branches. The further we went, the more dense became these woods, and we saw no vestige of land in any direction. It was getting dark, and for eight persons we had only a small bit of bread. In my increasing anxiety I said to the head boatman, 'I think you have lost your way; would it not be more prudent to turn back, and return to the first place where we could land?' He answered that he had not lost his way; that he could not possibly have done so; but he looked so disturbed that I felt all the more convinced that we were really lost in that dreadful marsh. At that moment we heard shouts in the distance. 'They are calling to us,' he said 'from the place where we are going.' 'On the contrary,' I replied, 'those cries are from an exactly opposite direction;' and as I was speaking we saw a canoe rowing towards us at a rapid pace. It was full of savages and negroes, naked to the waist, and looking as if they were rushing on their prey. Our boatmen turned pale; not one of them could have offered any resistance. I turned to my three young companions, who were frightened, though they did not anticipate the danger as I did, and said, 'We have only one thing to do, and that is to pray to God, and place ourselves under the protection of the Blessed Virgin.' I made a vow to have nine Masses of thanksgiving said if we escaped this peril. The canoe soon

overtook us. The savages stared at us, and I saw them glancing at some bottles of drinkable water in our boat, which they probably supposed to be wine, of which the Indians are passionately fond. I saw they had no provisions with them. They went away, however, without asking us for anything. I thought they were going on, to wait for us in a still more favourable position for an attack, and I began to exhort my companions to prayer and patience. Our boatmen were so tired and exhausted, that I did not venture to question them for fear of making them angry. At last, when I was in the full conviction that we were hopelessly lost in that marsh, all at once I saw land before me, and a cart with four oxen waiting for us on the shore. It was like a resurrection. I was not prepared for death."

It turned out, however, as Madame Duchesne afterwards discovered, that these terrible savages which had frightened them so dreadfully, far from being cannibals, were good and obliging persons, whose gestures and cries had for their sole object to point out to the boatmen that they were going in a wrong direction.

The travelling party got into the cart, which was slowly and laboriously dragged along the heavy road by the tired oxen.

"I shall never forget," Madame Duchesne says, "the names of those beasts, *Flambeau*, *Rousseau*, *Gaillard*, *Tout Blanc*. We heard them continually repeated in those woods, where it was necessary at every moment to stimulate and encourage the poor animals as they struggled on through the mud. We passed the night in an inn where a few days afterwards a party of travellers were robbed. We fared well there. Thence again we started again at two o'clock in the morning, and arrived at the House of the Sacred Heart at nine a.m."

Madame Audé was sitting in the midst of her little

scholars, when a man came in to tell her that three nuns were arrived. She thought he was making a mistake, and that it was only a letter from her Sisters. "No, no," he cried; "they are here themselves." "It is my dear Mother," Madame Audé exclaimed, and breaking away from the children, who were throwing their arms round her, and crying out also, "Dear Mother! dear Mother!" She rushed to the door to see if she could discern the approaching travellers, and found herself in Madame Duchesne's arms. "I was breathless with delight," Madame Eugénie writes; "and I did not try to repress that joy. I felt our Lord approved of it."

Madame Duchesne's happiness was deeper and more composed, and also a little mitigated by the sickly appearance of the little colony. It was not with impunity that these brave and faithful souls had gone through so many privations in an unhealthy climate. "Madame Eugénie," she wrote, "looks very delicate, and so does Sister Mary Layton, who was very ill whilst I was there. Madame Xavier has a sort of nervous fever, and Madame Gérard looks as if a breath would knock her down. My two novices will be the only healthy ones, and Sister Carmélite, being a native of this country, will be very useful. I have advised Madame Eugénie to make her a Choir Sister. She has all the necessary qualifications."

Most of the children were absent for the holidays, but a few of them had not gone home. Amongst those who remained was one of the most promising pupils, Miss Hardey, afterwards a nun of the Sacred Heart, then Superior Vicar, and at last Assistant General of the Society. She has never ceased to be a Mother to those American houses, of which she was one of the first daughters. On the occasion of Mother Duchesne's visit to Grand Coteau, she was chosen to recite the customary compliment.

The nuns availed themselves of this opportunity to

make a retreat. As they happened to have no priest near at hand to preach the exercises, Mother Duchesne was obliged herself to give the spiritual instructions to the Sisters. These and the advice she gave to them in private produced an immense deal of good, an instance of which we find in the following letter from Mother Murphy to Mother Barat. "I have had at last the happiness of meeting our dear Mother Duchesne. I had made a novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus to obtain her arrival. You can easily understand my happiness. Like the holy old man Simeon, I felt almost inclined to say that I have nothing left to wish for, and that I was content to end my earthly pilgrimage. I wanted some one to speak to, some one to whom I could open my heart. Mother Duchesne, to whom I disclosed all my thoughts, has calmed my fears. She understands my French. I have never been able to speak to any one with more facility, and never felt greater peace than in accepting her decision. She is quite a woman after my own heart."

Madame Duchesne wrote to the Mother General that she was delighted with Grand Coteau. "The house is charming," she said; "the chapel devotional, and the sacristy well furnished with sacred vessels. It is evident that God blesses this establishment. We see it by the wonderful improvement of the children in piety as well as in their studies. One young girl, for instance, who at the age of sixteen had never heard of God, swore dreadfully, smoked like a man, and only liked to be with the negroes, is now baptized, goes to confession and Communion, and makes a meditation every day. Another, who when she arrived did not know how to read or write at all, can now read and write both in English and French. A missionary priest added his testimony to what Madame Duchesne wrote about these happy transformations. "The nuns of the Sacred Heart," he said, "do an immense good at the

Opelousas. The children sent to them are like young savages, and in a short time they change them into little angels."

They had at that time seventeen scholars. "It is wonderful what Eugénie does," Madame Duchesne repeats in another letter. "I might almost say it is miraculous. She is one of those souls devoted like victims to the Sacred Heart, which draw down graces on all who approach them. Her house is already better established than ours. She is so generally liked and esteemed, and she fully deserves it by her self-devotion and prudence." And again, in another letter, she tells Mother Barat that of all her daughters in America, Madame Eugénie is the one who has most solidity of mind, the most pleasing manners, and the greatest talent for government, and that to these gifts she unites a complete self-devotion and a courage above her sex.

After a visit of three weeks to the Opelousas, and a separation which she describes herself as heart-breaking, Madame Duchesne and Miss Theresa Pratt left Grand Coteau. They went off in a cart drawn by two horses, one of which belonged to Madame Audé. "This poor animal," Mother Duchesne said, "which reminded me of the horse in the Apocalypse, resolutely refused to go on, and both he and his companion ended by falling into a quagmire. My pupil and I vainly tried to drag them out. At last a negro played the part of a horse, and after we had unloaded the cart, he managed to draw it. We had recourse again to the oxen, who pulled us through the miry roads, then embarked on the steamer of the Bayou, and at last took a carriage, which brought us to Plaquemine."

There Madame Duchesne had to remain five days waiting for a boat to take them up the Mississippi, and looking forward to great difficulties, on account of the river being very low. But she was far from foreseeing what calamities were in store for her.

A series of dangers of every kind attended her return. It almost seemed as if it was the hour of the Evil One and of the powers of darkness, and that Satan, thwarted by so many generous enterprises, was making a last desperate effort to defeat them. As everything depended on Madame Duchesne, it was towards her that his anger was directed, and on her head that, with the leave of God, he poured out his rage.

At last she was obliged to go to New Orleans in order to find a boat on which to return to St. Louis. She was again received with the greatest kindness by the Ursuline nuns, at whose convent she had lodged on her arrival from France. She fell ill whilst staying with them. They nursed her with the most devoted care, but in that unhealthy climate it seemed impossible for her to recover. Change of air was necessary, and the doctor told her to leave New Orleans at once if she wished to escape the yellow fever, so fatal in the delta of the Mississippi. She was most anxious herself to depart, though feeling little able to encounter the fatigues and dangers of a journey of four hundred leagues in a desert.

She was obliged to embark on board the steamer *Hécla*, which was just starting. "But it was," she describes, "with a sort of horror that she set her foot in it, the sort of horror felt at the sight of a grave. As soon as she was in the boat her attack of illness increased, and it was evident that she had the yellow fever. This terrible epidemic was raging on board the steamer, and on the second day of the journey three persons died, the captain, the first mate, and one of the passengers. On the same day a poor young Frenchman, who had already been very ill in a hospital at Lyons, was seized with such paroxysms of pain, that it became necessary to leave him on shore, at the entrance of a village, where he died. "Happily there was a priest in that place," Madame Duchesne wrote.

It was terrible to her to see men dying around her, as if they had been animals, without any spiritual or temporal assistance, without even the aid of a word or look of sympathy, and to hear singing and joking going on by the side of the dead and dying.

Heroically surmounting her own sufferings, Madame Duchesne then became a true Sister of Charity on board that ill-fated vessel. "There was one man," she wrote, "whom I saw several times during the illness that preceded his death. I hope God will have shown mercy to his soul. He had never belonged to any religion; never been baptized." In a letter addressed to Mother Barat, Madame Lucile Mathevon gives greater details about this incident. "You will wonder as I do at the goodness of our Lord Who suffered this journey to prove the means of saving a soul which the prayers and the great charity of our Mother has sent to Heaven. This poor man was seized with the yellow fever, she did not hesitate to visit him in order to speak to him of God and to give him the water of baptism. When he was at death's door and every one had forsaken him, she hurried to his side and opened to him the way to Heaven." This courageous woman's strength at last failed from the violence of the fever, and she could no longer conceal her sufferings. It was impossible for her to continue the journey, and she and her young pupil were landed on the shore near Natchez. She crawled on to seek a shelter, but at the entrance of the little town she was told that from fear of contagion it was positively forbidden to admit within it any traveller coming from New Orleans. This was a terrible moment for Madame Duchesne. "We crossed the river," she said, "and sitting on the sand waited till one of the passengers could find some abode for us. After several fruitless trials, a good man whose wife had died three weeks before took us in. "He gave me her bed," Madame Duchesne said, "with

the same sheets on it that she had at the time of her death. I was in one of my violent attacks of fever, but I sat up as straight as I could, in order not to betray my sufferings. I did this during four days, during which I remained shut up, doctoring myself. God blest the effort, for after that time the attacks of fever diminished."

The soul gave strength to the body, but it was itself enduring a heavier privation, that of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. St. Francis Xavier says in one of his letters: "The missionary's greatest trial is sometimes not to be able to celebrate the Holy Mysteries and to be deprived of the Bread of Heaven, which strengthens the heart of man, and is his only consolation in the evils and miseries of life."

It was of this suffering alone that Mother Duchesne complained.

She sent to the Curé of Natchez, M. Mano, whom she had seen on her way to the Opelousas. He was moved with pity for a person whose eminent sanctity he had discerned, and hastened to procure for her a lodging outside the town, where some excellent Catholics, Mr. and Mrs. Davis, nursed her with the most devoted care. He had also meant to visit her and hear her confession on the following Saturday before giving her Holy Communion, but he was not able to cross the Mississippi for one reason amongst others that he was too poor to pay for his passage. Madame Duchesne was most anxious to go and hear Mass on the following Sunday, but the doctors and authorities were inexorable. "This refusal," she wrote, "contributed not a little to a return of the fever, for I had never felt so much need of Mass and the sacraments. Death, which seemed so near, made me intensely anxious for them."

The strength of her constitution and the help of God made her overcome all these sufferings. At the end of a few weeks, she was able to begin again her homeward

journey on board the steamer *Cincinnati*. At the junction of the Mississippi and the Ohio they found the *Hécla*, on which they had made the previous passage, lying dismantled on the shore under the care of three men left in charge of it in that desolate spot. Its boiler had burst and two of the crew were dreadfully burnt. The yellow fever had also carried off many of them. The pilot, who was watching over the remains of the shattered vessel, pointed out to the travellers a little island where they had buried thirteen persons. "I cannot help feeling that God's sheltering arm has protected us," Madame Duchesne wrote, "for in the midst of so many calamities it seems almost impossible that we should not have otherwise perished." But the spiritual refreshment she so ardently longed for was still delayed. "What with the time of stoppage and the ten or twelve days more which the rest of the journey will require, even if all goes on well, we shall have been sixty days without Mass or Communion. Not even during the Revolution did I endure so long a fast from spiritual food."

One more accident put the finishing crown to her patience. The *Cincinnati* ran aground on a sandbank opposite New Madrid, a hundred miles from St. Louis. The river was so low that it was impossible to foresee when the boat could proceed—this delay and uncertainty were harassing! Madame Duchesne, thirsting for intimate communication with God, resolved at any rate to turn this interval to account by making her annual retreat. She tells Mother Barat: "That every one on board spoke English, those who understood French could not speak it, and so finding herself alone with God, she availed herself of this opportunity. She wanted nothing but Him. The only help she had being a Bible, which she found in the steamer, and her little Office Book."

A fortnight elapsed in this way, and then she received a pressing invitation from Catholics in the neighbourhood,

Mr. and Mrs. Kay, to come and stay in their house. Madame Duchesne and Miss Pratt accordingly spent five days with these kind people. At last the waters of the Mississippi rose, and they were able to continue their journey. Reckoning up the amount of her spiritual privations, Madame Duchesne calculated that she had lost during her journey at least one hundred and twenty Masses, eighty Communions, and almost all the Benedictions during four months. Her hope was that this bitter sowing would produce some day a harvest of souls on those shores.

She ends her narrative with these words: "I feel, dear Mother, that all these sufferings will not be thrown away, and may procure several establishments in Natchez and at New Orleans, which, in spite of the earthquake which nearly destroyed it in 1811, increases every day in size and population."

On the 28th of November, 1822, Madame Duchesne arrived at St. Louis, and thence hastened to Fleurissant, where her daughters, knowing what she had gone through, were anxiously awaiting her.

The account of this journey excited to the highest degree the sympathy and admiration of the Society in France. Father Varin could hardly say whether he pitied or envied most the tribulations of this brave servant of God. In an instruction to the community at Paris he spoke as follows: "My dear daughters, it is just when we are about to perish that God has in store for us the most remarkable graces. What a wonderful instance of God's Providence Madame Duchesne's history presents! We see her, this valiant Foundress, struck down in the midst of her travels by a mortal disease, alone, helpless, in a strange land; shut out of a village on account of her illness and the fear of contagion, laid prostrate on the sand, consumed by a burning thirst, sighing for a priest and calling for one in vain. . . . What is to become of her? What

will happen to her little colony? Vain questions! She has put her trust in God's Providence, and Providence has found means to save her. Courage, then, my children, let us throw ourselves into the arms of Jesus Christ, and let us not be anxious about anything."

And by the side of this wonderful mark of Divine protection, we cannot help admiring that other miracle of grace, the invincible courage of a woman sustaining one of those supernatural struggles of which a Father of the Church has said: "Your struggle against Hell has for its witnesses the angels and the Master of the angels."* In the midst of this struggle she is herself mortally wounded, and by that very fact she deals a deadly blow to the enemy of God. It seems as if Heaven itself is failing her, and still she makes in her own heart an invincible retreat. All she asks for is Jesus. His absence is the only absence that affects her. Without Him her cross is bereft of all consolation. She feels this deeply, and it is in this sense that Father Barat writes to console her: "There is only one thing on earth which can be a real trial to us, and that is the privation of Communion, unless we add another which is to see souls perishing and not to be able to save them. This was the cause of Jesus Christ's intense agony, softened only by the thought that He was fulfilling His Father's will by devoting Himself to our salvation. You would have won for Him perhaps a greater number of souls if you had remained in France, but you would have suffered and merited much less."

In the same letter Father Barat gave to Madame Duchesne a hope which was realized later on. Her niece, Amélie Jouve, had made her vows on the feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, and he tells her that this young relative wished much to join her, and hoped that the words which her sister Aloysia had said to her a few days before her death, "Amélie, you will replace me," would prove prophetic.

* St. Ephrem.

## CHAPTER XV.

*The Apostolate at Fleurissant. The school deserted. Poverty of the Novitate. The Jesuits at Fleurissant. Their spiritual direction. Schools for the poor and for the Indians.*

1823—1825.

On the 6th of November, 1821, the Abbé Perreau had written these lines to Madame Duchesne: "God's intention is to sanctify the land you dwell in by your crosses and privations of every sort, in order to prepare it to bear fruits hereafter."

If sacrifice is indeed the first condition of any work for souls, such was particularly the case with Madame Duchesne's life and apostolate. She felt this herself, and the more strongly that she believed a supernatural intimation had been vouchsafed to her that such would be her fate. We find this in a letter she wrote in January, 1823, and the words she speaks throw light on her whole destiny: "I always have great fear of doing harm wherever I go, because of words which I once distinctly heard—'It is not by success, but by enduring contradictions, that you are destined to please Me.' Whether this was an illusion, the effect of a heated imagination, I do not know, but I have always that feeling in my soul, and I am afraid of undertaking anything from a presentiment of failure."

At the beginning of January, 1823, she wrote in the same strain: "My dear Mother, these days remind me of the retreat I made just before you received me into the Society. I was too much attached then to my holy mountain home, and I did not foresee that I should be

one day so entirely separated from you to whom I was bound by such delightful ties. God Who intended me to come here has broken those ties, and I cannot help wondering over the power of grace which makes me happy and contented so far from everything I love much, and without meeting with any success to make me forget the sacrifices I have made."

We shall now see how these last words were realized by the destruction of her whole work at Fleurissant, and how this led to a reconstruction which proved the crowning reward of her apostleship and the greatest proof of the all-powerful mercy of her Divine Master.

In the same letter, Madame Duchesne mentions the origin of that ruin which she was beginning to foresee: "At the same time that I enjoy the great pleasure of being again with my Sisters, and of resuming the observance of our holy rule, I bitterly feel the grief of hearing how many of our pupils have left us, and, devoted to the pleasures of the world, are forgetting God. The dangers are indeed so great at St. Louis that we have everything to fear for the children who are still under our care. I feel about St. Louis what St. Francis Xavier felt about Malacca. There was for a moment a burst of zeal and excitement which has been followed by the greatest indifference about religion, the natural consequence of a wild love of pleasure. Our poor children are taken to balls, to plays, and to Protestant Churches: bad books are placed in their hands, they spend their days in idleness, and several promising vocations have vanished in this worldly life."

At the same time that this struggle was going on against the perversion of the children and that the anxieties and sorrow of their teachers was at its height, they had lost their firmest support by the departure of Mgr. Dubourg, who left St. Louis to return for good to Lower Louisiana. He carried away with him some of his priests, and amongst

others, M. Delacroix, the chaplain of the nuns of the Sacred Heart and the apostle of all that country. So that at her return from her dangerous journey Madame Duchesne had the grief to find her Bishop gone. "He has had," she wrote, "great trials to endure—the departure of two of his priests, the deaths of two of his best missionaries, and also the ingratitude of a town upon which he had lavished benefits without end. A party was formed against him on account of the debts contracted for the building of the church. They wanted to sell the presbytery, and even a house his lordship had built himself on the same site. The storm has subsided, but what was said and done remains, and what is worse, the spirit of worldliness and impiety also remains, triumphing over a momentary zeal for religion. We have also our share of the abuse of the world and its opposition. I am not discouraged; it is not for the world that we work."

And in another letter she writes to Madame Barat: "We feel the effects of these evils, but they signify much less when it is poor women like us who are attacked than when insults are directed against the head of religion in a country. The world, alas, talks; the world goes its way; God calls it to repentance by the wonders He performs, by His chastisements, by the voice of His priests, and He cannot make His way into the hearts of men, nor awaken them from the lethargy of indifference. Oh, what outrages are committed against the Heart of Jesus!"

The moral condition of the town and the antagonistic spirit which prevailed in it after the Bishop's departure, brought about the ruin of the school. On the 10th of March, 1823, Madame Octavie wrote to the Mother General that only eighteen scholars remained with them, many of them paying very little and others nothing at all, but that for the spouses of Christ this did not signify. "And," she added, "do not let our Sisters in Europe who wish to come

here expect consolations. There is nothing but disappointment in everything which we undertake for the good of souls. It is a hopeless and very poor country, full of the most scandalous disorders. Protestantism with its innumerable sects chokes the good seed wherever it is planted."

The inevitable consequence of the diminution of pupils paying for their education was a state of poverty which called forth no complaints but rather expressions of gratitude from these true servants of Christ.

"We are happy enough," Madame Octavie writes, "to be poor as to lodging and food and dress. This is a real joy for your poor Octavie, who for the love of Jesus and in imitation of the seraphic St. Francis has taken poverty as her portion."

This penury might indeed have been lessened by sending away the children who were not paid for, and Madame Duchesne was strongly recommended to do so. But she positively rejected that advice. "No," she said, "many of these children would lose their faith if they left us. We like better to keep them and to deprive ourselves of everything. *Fiat*, whether we are tried by famine or by illness."

She did more, for six orphan girls were received for nothing. She shared with them the coarse maize bread and the potatoes on which the community lived.

The bitterest trial of all that they had to go through was to be calumniated by children whom they had brought up. It was in that manner that two young girls who had been educated in their home discharged their debt of gratitude. "They have gone almost as far as to say that we poisoned our pupils," Madame Duchesne wrote, "but to be ridiculed and calumniated by our own pupils is not what grieves us most. What makes us unhappy is to see them in danger of losing their souls in a life of dissipation and idleness. We

sometimes are obliged to fall back on the hope that those poor children whom we love so dearly may die before the wickedness of the world entirely perverts them."

Always deeply humble, the poor Superior easily believed that she was the sole cause of all these disasters, and wrote to Mother Barat in that sense. "I spoil everything; you would do the greatest good by removing me from the Superiorship. I deserve it not as a favour but as a punishment." And in another letter she says: "I long to leave this miserable world, not because I have not fears regarding my end, but because I see that I am not capable of advancing the work of the Society in this country. I linger on with the pain of feeling that I do not fulfil my duties, that souls suffer in consequence, and yet I do not see the moment when I shall be reduced to my proper place. I beseech you to weigh well before God the needs of your children, whom you love all the more on account of their sufferings and humiliations."

Mother Barat's answer was as follows: "How can you expect, my dear Philippine, to be relieved from your post. No doubt another might have more virtue than you, but why can't you for the sake of your work and the salvation of souls acquire the qualities you need. It is not, alas, for me to give you this lesson, for I require it even more than you do. And yet am I not obliged to bear my burthen which grows every day heavier? Let us then both trust in the Heart of Jesus. He will strengthen our weakness, He will repair our foolish mistakes, and even sometimes make them useful to us. If He acts in this way towards your faithless and faulty Mother, what will He not do for you?"

Mother Barat was right. God destroys only to rebuild, and if He was destroying the school at Fleurissant, it was in order that His courageous servants might exert all their energies in another place where He was preparing to build up something great.

In the midst of all these disasters, the novitiate, strange to say, was increasing in proportion to its trials. All the sap of the new tree was concentrated on that side, and though its branches suffered, its roots were striking deeply into the ground.

On the 20th of March, 1828, Madame Duchesne wrote to the house in Paris: "I shall not indulge in any lamentations to-day, for I have had the happiness of giving the veil last Sunday, during the octave of St. Francis Xavier, to our Sister Elisabeth Herbert, one of the pupils of our day school, a good hard-working girl of sixteen, and devoted to her vocation. A still greater joy was in store for us on the feast of St. Joseph. Yesterday, our Sisters, Xavier and Regis Hamilton, and Sister Mary Anne, made their first vows. They are, the two first especially, the flower of our novitiate. Sister Regis was afraid of dying of joy on that day, and she said this so often that I began to be afraid. She would have been such a great loss to us."

Poverty was of course conspicuous on this happy occasion. Many were the expedients that both novices and professed Sisters had to resort to in order to complete their habits. Sister Regis's cloak was made out of a worn-out cassock, which Father Dunand had left behind him. An old black gauze frock which had belonged to one of the pupils furnished Sister Mary Anne with a veil and little shawl. As to Sister Hamilton, she would have been quite grieved at wearing a new habit, if to comfort her a ragged tippet had not been added to it.

Certainly no human incitements could have inspired these vocations. A state of such real poverty was a warrant of the purity of intention which led these fervent girls to join the Sacred Heart. It was a pledge of solidity which made that hard life a constant subject of thanksgiving to Madame Duchesne. "There is one advantage

here, and that is the way in which our novices practise mortification and endure privations. I must own to you that I pity a little those who have been used to the comforts of life. Here we have to turn our hand to every sort of work, to milk the cows, not in a stable, but often in mud a foot deep, in the snow and rain; one cooks, another bakes. Every moment we have to cross yards or rather quagmires which nothing can dry up. We have neither clogs nor overshoes. Such articles are unknown here, and the state of the house often evinces it."

But the new nuns, the novices, and postulants vied with their Mothers in the brave endurance of their trials and privations. And they wrote a joint address to Mother Barat to tell her of "their exceeding happiness," and to assure her that they were determined to be victims devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Mother Barat sent them her blessing: "You are," she said, "the first stones chosen for the edifice of the Sacred Heart in that immense country. The Lord will bless you. He will multiply your number, and, as in France, you will see many houses springing up by your efforts."

The accomplishment of these predictions was at hand. The following year brought to the community and especially to the novitiate the most unhoped for blessing, that of a guidance inspired by the original spirit of the Institute, and which was about to give a regular and uniform impression to the colony of the Sacred Heart, to incite, to sustain, and to animate its zeal by the most powerful example, and thus to inaugurate a new phase in its spiritual progress and apostolate.

Since her arrival in America, Madame Duchesne had never ceased for her own and her daughters' sake to long for a Jesuit director. In her childhood she had looked with envy and admiration on the missionaries of the Society toiling amidst the savages. And now with the most intense

desire she longed for their presence in a country once hallowed by their labours and often by their blood.

For a long time she had cherished the hope that Father Barat would come. But he was growing old, and despairing of the consent of his Superiors he told her in answer to her intreaties, "that unless he was taken up and carried away by the hair of his head, like the Prophet Habacuc, he had no hope of crossing the ocean." Father Varin said the same in one of his letters. "Shall I own to you that in spite of my weak and poor health, I feel every day a pressing desire to consecrate my last efforts and the last breath of my life to the service and the consolation of your little colony. I should be overjoyed if our Lord, by the instrumentality of those who stand to me in His place, was to say to me: 'Go and help My new family in Louisiana.'" But this was only the dream of an heroic soul, and no one had ever thought it would be realized.

Madame Duchesne's prayers were granted however, but in a different way. It happened that at that time eleven Flemish Fathers and Brothers of the Society of Jesus, who had been driven out of their country by the persecution of Frederic William of Nassau, King of the Netherlands, had taken refuge at the College of Georgetown in America, which belonged to the Jesuits. Just at that moment Mgr. Dubourg was leaving St. Louis, and anxious about the scarcity of priests which his departure would cause in Missouri, he went and asked the Flemish refugees at Georgetown to settle in his diocese. He had seen on his way at Washington the President of the Republic, and had obtained the promise not only of his protection but even that of a subsidy for the establishment of the Indian missions in Missouri and Upper Mississippi.

It was this work chiefly that he proposed to the refugees at Georgetown. The Rector of this colony was Father Charles Von Quickenborn, a man whose magnanimity and

strong faith raised him above the vicissitudes of life. His assistant, Father Temmermann was a model of apostolic zeal and religious virtue. They were the only priests and professed Fathers of this little band. Five novices all belonging to good families had torn themselves away from their afflicted relatives and followed them into exile; one of them was Peter de Smet, the future apostle of Oregon, Kansas, and the Rocky Mountains.

"Seven young men, full of talent and of the spirit of St. Francis Xavier, very forward in their studies, varying in age from twenty-two to twenty-seven, with their two excellent masters and some excellent Lay-brothers, this is," Mgr. Dubourg wrote, "what Providence has at last sent me in answer to my prayers. If I had been allowed to choose, I could not have made a better selection."

They accepted the offer, or rather the hopes of the good Bishop, for he could hardly hold out to them anything more. "They come here," Madame Duchesne said, "relying only on Providence, but all the more satisfied on that account. The acquisition of these Fathers is an inestimable blessing for this country, where their motto, 'For the greater glory of God,' will be their sole riches and their only support." The Bishop expressed the same feeling: "I wanted out of prudence to secure funds before I sought for men. But now the men are come before the funds. This is the way in which God defeats the plans of our poor human prudence. May His holy will be done!" And again: "How could I have rejected this holy band of apostles for the unworthy reason that I do not know how I can feed them? God has called, God has sent me these labourers, He will not let them die of hunger. I have never known a more peaceful and entire confidence than in undertaking this work so far beyond my means. The only feeling I have about it is one of entire trust and of inde-

scribable joy, with a certain amount of shame and fear when I think of the immense mercy of God."

Mgr. Dubourg was right in saying "that his young missionaries were not men likely to be staggered by difficulties." When he asked the Master of Novices at Georgetown how they would accomplish the journey, being obliged to own that he had no money to give them, the holy religious replied: "Oh, do not be anxious about that, we shall go on foot and beg our way. There is but one wish amongst us on that point." They travelled in that manner over four hundred miles, half of which lay across countries under water, and through which they had to wade up to their breasts. Thus they arrived on the 3rd of June, 1823, at the post assigned to them.

This residence was that same farm at Fleurissant which belonged to the Bishop, and where the nuns had encamped on their arrival. Fleurissant was thus to become the head-quarters of all the holy expeditions of this devoted set of apostles; but they were absolutely without anything in the house or rather hut they lived in. In order to exist, it was necessary to work, to clear, to cultivate the land only with the help of three negroes whose support cost more than their labour was worth. It was a desperate struggle, and the absolute want of money, clothing, and food would have reduced the missionaries to starvation or driven them away if, as they often said, Providence had not assisted them by means of Madame Duchesne. She felt that a particular mission was assigned to her, for she had always considered it as one of her principal duties to show hospitality to apostolic labourers. For these new-comers she multiplied her efforts. Not only by begging for them amongst the rich families of St. Louis, but by making over to them the linen, the furniture, and the provisions of her own community, up to the most indispensable articles. Whenever she knew of a want at the farm, gathering together

her Sisters she told them what she had discovered, for she was never asked for anything, and then her tears spoke of her anxiety to meet it. "It would break your heart," Madame Lucile wrote, "to see the tears Mother Duchesne sheds on these occasions."

The little council used invariably to decide that they ought to make fresh sacrifices. The trousseau, which Mother Lucile Mathevon had brought from France, and which comprised the only garments in the house not quite worn out, was in various ways adapted to the needs of the new-comers. "It would be a greater happiness," this good Mother wrote, "to clean the boots of these good missionaries than to be the Queen of France." Half the nights were spent in making and mending their clothes. "What joy I felt," Madame Duchesne said, "in working at the Fathers' wardrobe. They dress like our holy protectors in France, whereas Jesuits here dress like secular priests. On one occasion, having received an alms of fifty piastres, she sent it at once to the Fathers. "It is fair," she wrote to Mother Barat, "that we should provide a little for others when God provides so well for us."

And yet at that moment the distress of the convent was at its height; they had now only eleven pupils who paid them anything, a dreadful hurricane had injured their house, the river had overflowed, and turned Fleurissant into an inaccessible island. The crops of cotton and Indian corn had perished. The poor nuns were obliged to fabricate themselves their candles, soap, thread, and shoes. Mother Barat could not help exclaiming when she wrote to them, "Oh, in what a sad state those good Fathers are, and you who are so poor yourselves still contrive to help them!"

But Madame Duchesne never thought of herself. "We are never without a cross," she said; "but entirely in the hands of Providence. It is so sweet to rest upon it! After

all, up to this day we have never been without what was absolutely necessary, and have been sometimes able to assist our good Fathers, who are still poorer than we are. They suffer much, and I only wish that some of the treasures wasted in France could be made over to them." And in another letter she says: "I should not care for our difficulties, if they did not deprive us of the means of contributing to the most important work in this country for the good of religion. I mean the novitiate of our Fathers, which is a perfect nursery of saints and apostles. I should like to tell you many consoling things concerning them. The Cross is their portion, and we are happy to march under the same banner." They were all joyfully treading that blessed path. Mgr. Dubourg wrote: "Those Fathers never complain. They are always satisfied. Huddled together, as they are in a tiny house, lying on skins for want of beds, and living on Indian corn and dripping, they are happier than rich men resting on down and indulging in pleasure. Still it is a duty for me to try and obtain for them the necessaries of life and means to exercise their zeal."

The nascent Association of the Propagation of the Faith gave at that time some momentary assistance to Mgr. Dubourg. Mother Barat collected also in France a few thousand francs, which she sent to Madame Duchesne. Her pious and devoted cousin, Madame de Rollin, had been the chief contributor. The Mother General wrote to her daughters: "You suffer. This is the portion of the spouses of the Sacred Heart. Ask God to let me have a Sister's share in this blessed treasure; for what more precious possession can we desire?" And again: "My dear children, we are poor like you; but you suffer more than we do, your poverty is more rigorous, and yet we have more sins to atone for, and we ought to endure their penalty."

A sort of offensive and defensive alliance in the service of God was established between the Jesuit Fathers and the nuns of the Sacred Heart at Fleurissant. In return for the temporal help they received from them, the missionaries undertook their spiritual direction, and lent them the aid of their ministry.

The director of the nuns, Father von Quickenborn, was a stern man. Madame Duchesne said he reminded her of Father Barat. His Flemish placidity, which in the midst of every kind of difficulty was never disturbed, gave a high idea of his sanctity to Madame Duchesne, whose soul was strong but impetuous. She felt that his spirit was the spirit of St. Ignatius, and she also compared him sometimes to Father Alvarez, sometimes to Father Rodriguez, and thought him far advanced in perfection. "When I see his tranquillity," she said, "in the midst of so many things that occupy and interrupt him, I cannot help believing that he dwells in the high regions of peace and union with God."

His words of direction were brief and concise, which suited Madame Duchesne. She had written at the time of her arrival at St. Louis: "The Bishop may have been afraid that we should tax the time of his priests; but this is not the case, and in the last instance he himself was the first to speak of confession."

It was impossible that the influence of the Father Rector could fail to produce good effects in the novitiate at Fleurissant. Madame Berthold speaks of it in a letter to the Mother General. "What immense blessings have resulted in our little community from the ministrations of the Fathers! I look upon this direction as an extraordinary instance of God's goodness to His spouses. You can hardly imagine, dear Mother, the fervour and regularity which exists amongst our Sisters: their humility, their poverty, their devotion. The aspirants and the novices are equally zealous."

The Mistress of Novices who wrote those words was amongst those who particularly benefited from this spiritual guidance. The Father Rector did not spare her humiliations. Madame Berthold was a very attractive person. Her remarkable beauty had often been a source of anxiety to Madame Duchesne. But her vocation and her own desires seemed to point to a life of self-sacrifice, and she was entering on that sacred course by a state of health which caused great languor, and an ulcerous ailment which disfigured her. Madame Duchesne told the Mother General that this disease had left a mark on her face, and that the Father Rector took advantage of it to make her practise humility. He used to ask to see the scar, and to say, "Oh, how hideous!" and she adds, "He has taken great pains with that soul, and succeeded in his efforts. He leads her in the path of sacrifice, detachment, and humility. We are all very happy under his direction, and like better to suffer from poverty and be thus guided, than to be better off and under another direction. . . . The novices cannot fail to derive great benefits from it. We could not have anything in this diocese half so desirable."

She herself was also rather severely treated by the good Father. "I have found," she said, "a Master of Novices, who does not let me do as I like; even thus he is not satisfied with my obedience." Those moments of displeasure on the part of her director entailed on Madame Duchesne many humiliations. One day that she had seen his novices "working like niggers," she sent them a better dinner than usual. Father Van Quickenborn sent it back with a message to the effect "that he did not want Madame Duchesne's alms." By this severity, which would only answer with a strong and perfect soul, he wished to take away the least admixture of self-complacency in her best actions, so that she should have their full merit. Sometimes he positively refused to give her absolution. Once this

trial lasted so long that, unable to endure any longer the privation of Holy Communion, she went all the way to Sainte Geneviève in order to obtain absolution from another priest. On one occasion the Father Rector and his penitent differed in opinion as to some new arrangement of the chapel. Neither of them would give way, and he told his spiritual daughter that he would not allow her to communicate or to renew her vows the following day. And that day was the feast of the Sacred Heart. Great was the surprise of the community not to see the Reverend Mother in the chapel. In order to avoid scandal she remained in bed, and suffered it to be supposed that she was ill. But when all the Sisters had gone into the chapel, and she could do so unobserved, the poor Superior made her way to the door, and kneeling on the pavement, gave way to sobs and tears.

Did this good Father carry to excess this severity? Had the natural rigidity of a cold northern nature been sufficiently tempered by the sweet and gentle spirit of the Gospel? Possibly not. Madame Duchesne, however, never complained of this harshness, and, looking upon it in a supernatural light, found in Father Van Quickenborn's direction, a consolation in her trials.

Speaking of her pecuniary needs, she wrote: "It would be a shame if I seemed to complain, blessed and favoured as I am by so many friends of God. To live in the vicinity of saints and to profit by their direction, are such blessings that I prefer our poor country home to the most wealthy establishment in a town." And another time she says: "I cannot understand that Madame Eugénie should have advised us to leave this place. Though a poorer house than hers, it is a happier one. The *principal spirit* will long maintain itself under the shadow of this good direction." And again: "Of course we shall be disappointed in this country if we look for fortune, honour, and

enjoyment. But when we desire nothing but the will of God, we are at peace, even though we do not succeed. God does not insist upon our being successful."

The years 1824 and 1825 were spent in this way. At last only four children remained in the school. But the nuns at Fleurissant had now entered on a different and wider field of labour. They were not only under the direction of the Jesuit Fathers, but they were sharing their hard labours, and the fruits already obtained, and greater results in prospect attached them to this field of toil. The Father Rector, who was also curé of Fleurissant, did not rest till he had conquered the whole place for our Lord. At no small cost was this work carried on. Sometimes the streams between the farm and the parish were so swollen by the rain that to get to the church the Father had to make his horse swim across torrents or to throw the trunk of a tree over the current, and make his way along this precarious bridge. "They have hard trials, but are nowise discouraged," Madame Duchesne declared, "the ancient spirit of zeal, courage, and poverty, lives in them anew."

She seconded these efforts to the utmost of her power. The failure of the school increased her desire to devote herself entirely to the poor. "I see," she said, "that, as in the days of our Lord, the poor are chosen to accomplish His work." "If according to our rule the poor are to be preferred to the rich, we have no one to envy in that respect, the Catholics being the poorest part of the population, they will never fail us."

Meantime a very holy Flemish priest, the Abbé Nérinckx, arrived at Fleurissant. He was the founder of a religious congregation of women, devoted solely to the instruction of the poor. His example, his words, and his edifying death excited to the utmost Madame Duchesne's zeal for a similar work. She wrote on the 1st of September,

1824, "M. Nérinckx was coming to settle in Missouri, and from thence to labour with his nuns among the savages, when death surprised him at the very moment he had come to visit our Fathers at Fleurissant. It would seem as if that saintly priest had come here only to spend his last breath in inspiring us with his love for the poor. He said that the rich were so indifferent in this country that the instruction of the lower classes was the only way of implanting religion in this land."

Two poor schools were opened by the Sacred Heart at Fleurissant. Madame Berthold had one for little girls, and an adult class for married women. Madame Mathevon instructed the boys, who became in their homes teachers of the Catechism. Some of the mothers used to say, "Since my children have gone to school they have told me that certain things are wrong, and I have left off doing them. There is a general stir." Mother Duchesne writes: "The retreats preached by the Fathers bring into the Church and then to the sacraments almost all the village. One hundred and sixty men have made their Easter Communion. On the feast of Corpus Christi the procession, followed by all the parishioners, went along all the streets and through the fields. The Blessed Sacrament rested on an altar erected in our oat field. Those Fathers would convert a kingdom."

Around Fleurissant in a circle of thirty to forty leagues, St. Charles, Le Portage, La Darenne, and several other places on the Missouri were like fortresses, whence the Fathers made apostolical raids on the surrounding countries. In this work also Madame Duchesne did all in her power to assist them. When they were starting for one of these expeditions she instantly made over to them the ornaments of the chapel, the sacred vessels, all the money she had, and, moreover, the single horse she possessed, and all this was done with a generosity and a simplicity which enhanced its merit. "I am as anxious about the house of the

Fathers as about our own," she wrote, "and more so, indeed, but I can do nothing; I am like the fly in the fable, buzzing about the coach." What made her miserable was the harm done to the Catholic missions by the Protestant sects with their abundance of means. "It is so sad," she said, "to be able to do so little for the good cause, when contrary efforts are successful," and in her zeal and sorrow she adds, that if she could turn her flesh into money she would gladly give it for the support of the missions.

It was Father Joseph Temmermann, the Rector's assistant, who first had the honour of laying down his life on the battle-field. He died suddenly on the 2nd of June, 1824, and Madame Duchesne envied his death, which she thus speaks of: "He fell a victim to the hard labour he went through for the missions, and in travelling across countries either submerged in water, or quite barren, where he was obliged to lodge in wretched huts, to drink nothing but water, eat only salted meats, and to lie on the bare ground at night. He is the first Jesuit who has died in this country. It was amongst the Illinois that the former missionaries dwelt and worked. Father Temmermann has been buried near the altar in our church. The poor Father Rector remains, therefore, at this moment, the only priest in this State; he has more to do than he can manage. Feeble as he is in health, he has four parishes to look after, and other distant missions divided by rivers. On Sundays he says two Masses, preaches three times in the morning, gives the Catechism, and during every interval hears confessions."

Then behind these churches and congregations was the boundless extent of Indian territories, where the tribes, dispossessed and driven back further every day, had a peculiar right to the blessings of religion. Madame Duchesne was always thinking of them, and everything relating to these poor natives had a prominent place in her

memory, her journals, and her letters. One day she speaks of a family of Iroquois or Algonquins, who had brought their infants to be baptized at Fleurissant. Another time she relates that a father had brought to the priests the bodies of his dead children, wrapped up in buffalo skins, to have them buried in a Christian land. And Madame Duchesne had the joy of being godmother to a little Iroquois girl, whom she called Mary. These were the first fruits of her approaching apostolate among the heathen. "It seems," she wrote, "that this country is preparing for a renewal of the apostolic labours of so many missionaries. The nation of the Sacs has said, "Hitherto we have had no ears for your words, but now we will listen to them and live like the white men." These hopes inflamed her zeal. "Send word," she says, "to my nephew Henry, that the fields are ripening for the harvest, and that it is time he should come and reap in the land which his patron, Saint Francis Regis, longed so much to cultivate. We constantly invoke him for the conversion of the Indians, and are making a forty days' prayer to obtain speedily an increase of labourers. But they must be dead to earthly things, for nothing gratifies nature in this ministry. Faith and the love of our suffering Lord alone can find any satisfaction here."

The Bishop had proposed that during the time which was still to elapse before the Jesuit novices could be ordained and sent out as apostles, half a dozen children belonging to the different Indian tribes should be received at Fleurissant in order to familiarize the young missionaries with their language and habits, and be themselves prepared to become guides, interpreters, and instruments to the future missionaries. This plan was followed, and Madame Duchesne acted the part of a mother towards these young Indians. She took charge of them, washed and mended their clothes, cleaned them herself, and those alone who

know the disgusting filthiness of the savages can estimate the heroic charity she thus evinced.

In the next place she asked leave of the Mother General that she too might open a school for the little Indian girls with a similar view. "They live on very little," she said, "and we shall beg clothes for them. We must neglect nothing for so interesting a work, so long desired, and the special object we had in coming here. As to being despised, we had better be so completely for the sake of our savages." And five weeks afterwards she wrote, "Sometimes I think that God ruined our first establishment and our first work, the boarding-school, in order to promote the more interesting work of the instruction of the poor savages; humiliations and our other troubles were intended to win this grace for us."

It was at the beginning of April, 1825, that a first instalment of this work was granted to their prayers. "One evening whilst we were saying office," Madame Mathevon relates, "the Father Rector arrived, and asked to see the Superior. To Madame Duchesne's great surprise he produced two little frightened savages, who were hiding themselves under his cloak. He had sent a cart to fetch them, and he left them with us. So now we have begun our class for the natives. This is the work, dear Mother, for which we have been pining. Each of us is longing to be employed in it."

Madame Duchesne was enchanted. "Our school for the little Indians," she wrote, "is at last beginning. We have given the care of it to an Irish Sister, Madame Mary O'Connor, who has just made her first vows. This employment isolates her from us during part of the day and all night. The little savages call her mamma, and run after her wherever she goes, to the stables, the poultry-yard, and the garden. These children could not endure a sedentary life. It often happened that the mistress found her scholars

climbing on the trees and jumping from branch to branch like young squirrels, caring infinitely more for liberty than study. But Madame Duchesne was full of hope for the future, and was already asking the Mother General to grant that one-tenth of the income of the American houses, when they arrived at having incomes, should always be devoted to the education of the children of savage parents.

Thus after eight years of labour and suffering all the Sacred Heart had achieved at Fleurissant was a work for the Indians, poor schools, and a small novitiate struggling amidst poverty and difficulties. But the future was to lose nothing by this apparently slow progress. Especially the active co-operation of the little colony with the work of the missionaries was about to lead to great results. What Mgr. Dubourg called a nursery of seedlings was soon to grow into a forest. The novices of the farm now preparing to become priests and apostles were soon to divide the land amongst themselves for Christian conquest. Father de Smet, ordained at Christmas, 1825, was going to renew amongst the last red skins of the Rocky Mountains the prodigies of heroism that gave him a resemblance to St. Francis Xavier, and Father Vereaghen, who had become a priest at the same time, was destined to spread the Gospel in the savannahs of the west until later it fell to his lot as Provincial and Vicar General of St. Louis to organize on a great scale the Church and Missions of the Missouri. Father Van de Velde, after directing for a long time the College of St. Louis was to become successively Bishop of Chicago and then of Natchez, and in the episcopate to labour with the zeal and live in the poverty of an apostle. Father John Anthony Elet by his nobility of mind, his goodness, his gifts of nature and of grace, was to leave ineffaceable traces of his ministry in the colleges of St. Louis and Cincinnati, then at Louisville, and finally in all the missions of the west, where he worked for forty years, and

left behind him a reputation of wisdom and sanctity which for ages to come will shine like a burning light. Father de Theux, who came from Europe in 1825, was about in the first instance to become curé of St. Louis, and from thence edify all Louisiana. Others followed them. The establishment of Fleurissant, now securely founded, was about to provide Missouri with colleges, preachers, curés, and missionaries who remained faithful to their starting-point, and left as a tradition to their successors the habit of gratefully looking upon the nuns of the Sacred Heart as the benefactors who had opened to them the way to these conquests. "Dearly beloved," St. John wrote to Gaius, "Thou dost faithfully whatever thou dost for the brethren and that for strangers. We ought therefore to receive such that we may be fellow helpers of the truth."*

This co-operation with so great an apostolic work will ever be an honour to Madame Duchesne.

Whilst the Jesuits were thus evangelizing the shores of the Missouri, the Lazarists on the banks of the Mississippi and the White River were establishing their missions at "La Prairie du Chien," in the midst of the Indians, and at three hundred leagues from St. Louis. Their seminary at Barreins was eventually to furnish fifty priests to the church of that country, and, moreover, gave it a Bishop, as Madame Duchesne tells us in her journal. "We have just heard that M. Rosati, the Superior of the Lazarists, is named coadjutor of Mgr. Dubourg. He wrote to ask us for prayers, but without saying why." Mgr. Rosati, consecrated on the 25th of March, 1823, was to live at St. Louis, whilst his Bishop continued to reside at New Orleans. This amounted in fact to the creation of a new bishopric.

Others, as we shall soon have occasion to relate, were being created elsewhere. Thus amidst the perils, the

* 3 St. John v. 8.

opposition, the desolation we have described, the Church in America was laying deep its foundations, and spreading in every direction. Slowly but surely its walls were rising and its organization advancing. The eyes of Catholics in the old world were directed with admiring solicitude towards this vast and promising sphere of Christian action and influence, the importance of which it was impossible to overrate, as the sequel has proved. In the first volume of the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, which was published that year, we find the following passage: "What wonderful prospects for religion those countries afford! Are we sufficiently impressed with the thought that they may form a second Catholic Europe, which may perhaps make up to the Church for what she has lost in the old world. It is possible that before a century has elapsed these solitudes may be peopled with a hundred millions of inhabitants. What will be the fate of those future generations? Will truth or error be their portion? This is a solemn subject of meditation for all who have at heart the salvation of their brethren. Already we discern tokens of God's mercy towards that land. A Bishop, mighty in deeds and in words, has created there a vast spiritual kingdom, and this is only the prelude of what Providence has in store for that country. Thanks to the aid of the Propagation of the Faith, Christian France will spread afar its beneficial influence. Those are the conquests worth making, such the sway we should covet."

## CHAPTER XVI.

*Foundation of St. Michel. Madame Audé Superior. Reign of the Heart of Jesus. Approbation of the Institute by Leo XII.*

1826.

THE events which we have been describing, whilst they had advanced the general interests of the American Mission, had not as yet brought about any new foundation of the nuns of the Sacred Heart. But in the years 1826 and 1827 two additional establishments, one near New Orleans and the other in the town of St. Louis, placed them in possession of the two extreme points of ancient Louisiana.

When after her visit to the Opelousas Madame Duchesne had spent a short time at New Orleans, she had felt in the midst of the terrible illness she was suffering from, a great desire to found a religious house in that maritime city. With the thought of the fearful yellow fever in her mind she had exclaimed: "I wish we could have there a hospital of the Sacred Heart!"

She had mentioned this wish to M. l'Abbé Portier, afterwards Bishop of Mobile, who was delighted to find that she would be inclined to found a house at New Orleans. She wrote herself about it to Mother Barat. "Do not be surprised, my dearest Mother, if I insist on the importance of this establishment. Well, if it is liable to the yellow fever, I think this danger might after all be braved in order to save souls. Whilst the manager of the theatre brings actors and actresses from France to ruin the

morals of youth, shall we suffer nothing with a view to save them?"

Zeal and gratitude inspired these solicitations; wisdom and prudence dictated the answers, contained in many of Mother Barat's letters. "My dear child," she wrote, "pray do not go beyond your strength. It would be very well if you had subjects enough, but for some years to come you must not reckon upon us. For my part I am quite determined to decline the foundation at New Orleans. . . . I think that three or four years will not be too much to wait. Try, dear Philippine, to explain this to your holy and excellent Bishop."

This delay of four years Madame Duchesne had accepted and endured, but when that time was elapsed she thought the plan was really ripe for accomplishment, and, indeed, it did happen then that God gave a token of His will and means to fulfil it.

The Abbé Delacroix, that zealous missionary, who, after being chaplain of the nuns at Fleurissant was removed to Lower Louisiana by Mgr. Dubourg, had now become curé of a little town called St. Michel, near New Orleans. Anxious to obtain for his parish a community of religious of the Sacred Heart, whom no one could appreciate better than himself, he laid his wishes before Madame Duchesne. She alleged at first the prohibition she had received from the Mother General to make henceforward any establishments in isolated places, and wrote to him that she found it hard to give up an establishment he proposed and would have directed, but that she could not disobey the orders of the Mother General, and, moreover, that having no means at that moment of meeting travelling expenses and making a new foundation, they could only think of remaining where they had bread to eat. "Do not," she said in another letter, "take any useless steps about this. It would only grieve me, for never having given you any consolation

I should find it too hard to feel that you were distressing yourself on my account." This sort of humble obedience, the Scripture says, gains victories, and God blest it in this case. M. Delacroix was not a man easily to give up a point. He won over to his side Madame Eugénie Audé, and in the month of June, 1825, she went to Fleurissant to talk the matter over with Mother Duchesne.

She found her exhausted by the struggles, the fatigues, and the privations we have described. "It is painful," Madame Eugénie wrote to Mother Barat, "to see her in so sad a state. She grows weaker every day. You, who can so well appeal to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, ask Him to preserve the life of our good Mother Duchesne in order to consolidate her infant work."

A general failing of vital power joined to giddiness gave fears of apoplexy. Mother Duchesne herself thought that her condition was precarious. In one of her letters written at the beginning of that year she says, "I have been much occupied lately with the thought of death. Still my soul seems to cling strongly to my body."

In July she wrote a more reassuring letter to Mother Barat: "My health seemed indeed to give way during the last few months. I did not feel the same person; but on St. Francis Regis's feast, having asked nothing and wished nothing, I suddenly found myself in my usual state. I cannot, then, mistake the hand that has touched me. All I have to do is to turn to better account the time to come, and you, my dear Mother, to send us here a better head."

She finished this letter by expressions of the deepest and strongest filial submission. "To-morrow in all the United States the festival of the Independence is celebrated. Catholics cannot forget that this day gave them freedom of religion. For my part I think of your feast on the 22nd of July (St. Mary Magdalen's day), and I celebrate in my

heart the blessed dependence which links me with you, and for which I shall thank God to my latest breath."

Mother Barat, in answer, joined to her fervent thanksgiving for the improvement in Madame Duchesne's health an earnest recommendation to spare her strength. "Do, my dear daughter," she writes, "let them take care of you. Think of the grief it would be to me if you were ill. I have no one to supply your place. You must live till I can spare you."

"I only wish to live," Mother Duchesne answered, "in order to spend my life in greater labours. I feel that rest is not for this world. We must suffer in body and in mind. If I can be of the smallest possible use for the glory of the Sacred Heart, I am willing to live on without success, without recompense, for the sole glory of that Heart, in which I remain your unworthy daughter."

The foundation at St. Michel was decided upon by Mother Duchesne and Madame Audé without any difficulty, for the former had successfully arranged the matter with Mother Barat. She wrote to M. Delacroix: "I would not give an opinion on a thing of this kind before I knew the intentions of our Superior General. But in her last letter she already gave a tacit consent to it." And then she adds, "Father Von Quickenborn admitted that he did not understand how it happened that everything goes on well here, for he could see nothing to account for it. By how much more does this apply to a poor, wretched, old good-for-nothing creature like me, without talents, virtue, or amiability of any sort. God only sees the end."

And with her usual humility she adds, "The only person who could carry on this work is Mother Audé. It requires her firmness, her tact, and the perfect regularity and prudence of her conduct, which qualify her to occupy a difficult position."

Mother Barat agreed both to M. Delacroix's proposals and to Mother Audé's nomination. Madame Murphy was

to succeed her as Superior at the Opelousas. She made it, however, an express condition that the general inspection of the three establishments was to be committed to Mother Duchesne, to whom she wrote, "You will now have three houses in Louisiana. You can understand, my dear daughter, that two of them being intrusted to young Superiors they will require guidance. The distance between us is so great that it would be impossible for your Mother to direct them without serious difficulties. It is to you, dear Philippine, that I commit this duty, as being the most experienced of those to whom I intrusted this mission. Though we have in our Society no regular Provincials, you will perform the functions of one in Louisiana. Of course you will lament over this new responsibility, but God will help you."

Mother Audé never failed accordingly to seek guidance from one whom she always looked upon as a Mother.

On the 28th of October she wrote to Mother Duchesne, "Here we are just at the moment of departure, a very heart-breaking separation for me, because I see my dear Sisters in great affliction, and also what a heavy burthen I leave to Sister Xavier, and how great a one I am about to assume. Pray to the Heart of our Lord for me, and ask Him to strengthen my weakness, and to make me a true lover of the Cross." And then she adds, "I take with me only four hundred and fifty piastres. This is all I have wherewith to pay our journey, to feed nine persons at St. Michel until we once get pupils, to furnish the house, and to buy a negro. This is little indeed. But if God is with us it is enough, it is a great deal."

On that day Mother Audé began her journey, taking with her a little colony, and amongst others a novice of the age of sixteen, Madame Aloysia Hardey, the same who when at school had complimented Mother Duchesne at the time of her visit to Grand Coteau.

They arrived at St. Michel on the eve of All Saints, and

heard Mass the next day in the parish Church. They were placed in the sanctuary in full sight of a crowd full of curiosity to see them. "At the curé's request we sang the Mass of Dumont, the *Tantum Ergo* of the Jesuits, a hymn, and the *Laudate.* The congregation joined in the singing with great feeling, many of them were moved to tears; but the more we are welcomed," Mother Audé wrote, "the more I feel a wish to hide myself in the Heart of Jesus. I can find rest nowhere else."

St. Michel is twenty leagues distant from New Orleans, on a hill overlooking the left bank of the Mississippi. Above and below the town forests of cypress trees extend for hundreds of miles, those near the river are for several months in the year partly under water. These woods, and the profound monotony of the prairies which they line, give to the scenery of this country a peaceful grandeur.

The population was chiefly composed of Canadian emigrants of French origin. When the Treaty of 1754 delivered up the French possessions in Canada to the English more than twenty thousand colonists took a final leave of their northern lakes and came to Louisiana, where the French Governor granted them land on the banks of the river, to which they gave the name of Acadia in remembrance of the native place they had just quitted. The parish of St. Michel had been detached in 1807 from that of St. Jacques de Cabahannocé, which had formerly been an Indian hunting station. It had at that time four thousand inhabitants, French or semi-French, who had remained faithfully attached to the mother-country. Even the Indians said, "When the grandfather (the King) of Spain gave the land to the grandfather (the King) of France, the trees were cut down and fires were lighted (in token of joy). But when the grandfather of France gave the land to the Americans we saw no trees cut down and no fires lighted, only ashes.

New Acadia was very faithful to the Catholic Church, and in all that country the true faith had made great progress since Mgr. Dubourg's return to New Orleans. One of the missionaries wrote at that time: "The Americans are slow in making up their minds, but when once they are convinced of the truth nothing stops them in acting up to it. When we are happy enough to effect a conversion we can reckon on its being a solid one. They are not much inclined to spirituality, but nothing would induce them to transgress God's commandments."

The Sacred Heart thus found the soil well prepared. M. Delacroix had raised a subscription amongst the Catholics which had soon amounted to 7,000 piastres, and with this sum a house was erected about one hundred feet in length, in the centre of the parish, and close to the church, with offices adjoining it. Mother Audé thus describes the new convent: "Our house is built of bricks, the front of it is painted, the shutters green, the roof boarded, the woodwork colour of mahogany. So you see that until a finer one is built for us elsewhere the house at St. Michel will be the Hotel Biron of Louisiana."

This letter was written on the 22nd of November, 1825. On the 30th, feast of St. Andrew, the nuns took possession of their little house. Shortly before Christmas Mother Audé wrote: "We are as yet quite without furniture. It is really the poverty of the Crib. Nothing can be more charming!" During those first weeks the nuns, who had neither plates nor dishes, had to sit round the saucepan and eat out of it as best they could. A pedlar called one day and the community agreed to purchase half a dozen tin plates, but as they had not money enough to pay for them he was requested to call the following day. At breakfast they had the luxury of a plate apiece, and felt quite elated, but unfortunately the pedlar appeared before the meal was ended, and as they had not wherewith to pay for their

purchase they were obliged at once to wash the six plates and let him carry them off. The Abbé Dusaussoy, nephew of the Mother General, who was then in America, laid the first stone of the school, and the first stone of the chapel was at the same time laid by Mgr. Dubourg. On Easter Day, the 26th of March, 1826, the Blessed Sacrament was placed in it, and Mother Audé wrote to Mother Duchesne: "I do not think there is in all the world a happier person than myself to-day! We have heard Mass for the first time in our little chapel. We have our Lord under our roof! Fancy what a joy this is to us, dear Mother, after having been five months without this blessing! . . . No one will deprive us of Him now! He will always be there! With Him I can suffer and bear everything."

Mother Barat congratulated her dear Eugénie on the new apostolate opening before her. "And now it is your business," she wrote, "to spread the knowledge and the love of the Sacred Heart in this part of America. What a great reason this is for me to love you more than ever! What would I not give to share your labours; but I am not worthy of it, and can only envy your happiness, and beg of our Lord to shower blessings on Eugénie and her daughters, who are all so very dear to me."

These good wishes were fulfilled, for a few months afterwards Mother Audé wrote, "We have seventeen children in the school, and could not have hoped for a more satisfactory beginning. Our little novices surpass my expectations. The mistresses are quite of one mind, and as docile as possible. The children are obedient, and they have excellent manners. . . . In temporal matters also God blesses us wonderfully. Our house is now quite finished. Although for four months we lived on nothing but milk and rice, our healths, mine especially, are very much improved. I have felt, dear Mother, that you were praying for your poor children at St. Michel that they may

spare no pains in their efforts to glorify the Sacred Heart. Your daughters kneel at your feet and beg for your blessing." And in another letter she says, "I feel strongly, my dear Mother, that the charity of Jesus constrains us, and at times I think that death would be a gain if I could wear out my life and die for the interests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

But Mother Barat would not hear of her children dying at that moment, and she says in answer to that outburst: "I do implore you, my dear Eugénie, to take care of your health, and not to wish too much to die. To suffer and to work for the glory of Him you love is far more worthy of your devoted heart. That other desire is an imperfect one, and would evince more love for yourself than for Him. The greatest proof we can give Him of our love is to save souls, and to devote ourselves to that object. And again, there is the interest of the Society which you have to support and to extend in a new country. Farewell, my children, may the Heart of Jesus make you worthy to be His beloved spouses, and to draw to Him a great number of hearts."

The Vicar General of New Orleans, M. l'Abbé Jeanjean, was struck with the zeal of the community at St. Michel, and wrote to Mother Barat, "The new house of the Sacred Heart is very promising. It is evident that all its members are animated with the spirit of God, and especially the Superior, who is very fervent."

Meanwhile all the letters of the Mother General to Mother Duchesne and Mother Audé recommended to their prayers the success of an affair of the greatest importance which was still a secret. It related to the approbation at Rome of the rules of the Sacred Heart, and accordingly towards the end of the year 1826 the news reached America that Pope Leo XII. had canonically approved of the Institute. Besides the joy which she felt in common with

all the Society, Mother Duchesne had the personal consolation of hearing that the work of the missions had been amongst the determining motives of this approbation. The holy Mother Bigeu, who had carried on and brought to a happy termination those negotiations, wrote to her at her return from Rome: "The work you are engaged in has not a little contributed to obtain for us the approbation of the Holy See. The Cardinals and the Pope himself were touched, and very much consoled to hear that the Sacred Heart had inspired women with so much courage."

Some American missionaries who had been at Rome had previously brought to Madame Duchesne a message from the Holy Father. "Tell them," the Pope had said, "to work hard for the increase of devotion to the Sacred Heart in the new world."

Madame Duchesne felt all the importance of this act of the Holy See, and the strength it gave her colony to be numbered amongst the regular troops of the Roman Church. "Oh, what a happy and unexpected event this is!" she wrote to Mother Barat, "How it pledges us for the future, and how ashamed I feel to see myself, as worthless as I am, after so many favours, which ought to have made me less unworthy of the privileged body to which I have the honour to belong."

She added that the Rector of the Jesuits in his joy at this great news had wished to be the first to announce it to the Sisters and the children; that he had ordered a solemn High Mass of thanksgiving to be sung, had asked his priests to say three Masses for the same intention, and was ready to grant as many Communions as we wished. "It is thus," she adds, "that in important moments saints show their feelings for the interests of God's glory."

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Foundation at Saint Louis. The four houses in Louisiana. Progress of the American Church. Departure of Mgr. Dubourg.*

1827.

In June, 1826, M. Niel, Curé of St. Louis, who was then in Paris, had earnestly begged the Mother General to grant to his parish a house of her Order. St. Louis was no longer that small town, or rather that large village, where Madame Duchesne arrived in 1818. Since 1823 the legislature of the United States had granted it the rights of a municipal city. The whole aspect of the town had changed. It began rapidly to increase, and promised to become what it now is, a large and prosperous city. This necessitated the formation of Catholic schools, and the Abbé Niel thought that nothing would answer the purpose as well as the establishment of the nuns of the Sacred Heart. From Paris he wrote to Madame Duchesne: "I hope I shall be able to realize a plan I have formed for the advantage of religion and the greater glory of God. The holy deaths at St. Louis of two of your former pupils, Mdlle. Leduc and Pélagie Chouteau, convince me that the young ladies of that town might in your hands turn out little saints. The number of those you have won over to the truth shows plainly enough what antagonists you and your Sisters would be to Protestantism. I cannot describe to you, Reverend Mother, all I feel at the thought that there may be in St. Louis a convent of the nuns of the Sacred Heart. . . You will train

there a new generation, and in ten years you will have done a great deal towards the sanctification of that place. When I go back to America I will unite my efforts with yours, and if God blesses our work we shall see a complete change in that country."

M. Niel offered a site for the convent and a donation towards the building, but where the rest was to come from it was difficult to foresee, considering that the mission could barely support itself. Mother Barat, Madame Duchesne, and the Father Rector were equally puzzled as to that question, which, however, was soon solved by Providence.

A wealthy inhabitant of St. Louis, who was also one of the magistrates of the town, Mr. Mullamphy, had long been a supporter of religion and of the Sacred Heart. Madame Duchesne mentions him in her letters as "a man mighty in wealth and in merit, and capable of governing a kingdom." Knowing how anxious he was to promote the welfare of the children of the poor at St. Louis, she asked him if he would not be inclined to second the Bishop's wishes by letting her have on easy terms one of the numerous houses he possessed in that town. Mr. Mullamphy immediately proposed to her one which stood in the midst of twenty-four acres of land—an almost new building, and far from the streets. "I have been to see it," Madame Duchesne wrote. "The situation, though less attractive than that of Sainte Marie, reminds me of it. The air is good. It is quiet, solitary, on a height, and overlooks the Mississippi and one side of the town." Mr. Mullamphy proposed to make over this property to the Sacred Heart, with five thousand francs for first expenses, on condition that the nuns agreed to take into the house for ever twenty orphans between four and eight years of age, for whom he or his eldest daughters would give ten piastres at their entrance and five piastres a year for their support. Their food was to be simple, to consist chiefly of Indian corn.

No tea or coffee was to be allowed, and they were not to wear shoes in summer, the little ones at any rate. The orphans might be kept, if desirable, till they were eighteen, and when they left their benefactor promised to give them each a small sum. It was stipulated that in the same house the nuns might have a boarding-school and a day-school. Mr. Mullamphy calculated that what he thus offered to give amounted to thirty-five thousand francs." Such is the statement in Madame Duchesne's journal.

Generous as these conditions were, still it was a heavy responsibility to accept, but she did not hesitate to do so. "Was it not impossible to refuse them?" she wrote to the Mother General. "We could not remain shut up in a village where we were subject to inundations of water six feet deep, which suddenly throws down our walls, carries away our bridge, devastates our garden, which during the last two years has produced nothing." Mother Barat, chiefly influenced by motives of charity, sanctioned this determination. "The orphanage," she said, "is so important. Could we have left it to others to accept this work? Twenty children are a great undertaking, but God will help you."

On the 2nd of May, 1827, Madame Duchesne, accompanied only by Sister O'Connor and one orphan, left Fleurissant for St. Louis. She had heard a Mass that morning in honour of St. Joseph, and placed her new establishment under the patronage of the Protector of the Holy Family. She had also promised to give the name of the Saint to the first novice who would be received there. Miss Eleanor Gray was thus honoured, and, with the habit of the Sacred Heart, took the name of Joséphine.

The house of the Sacred Heart, which is now, in consequence of the increasing size of St. Louis, in the centre of the town, was then in the midst of the woods and quite isolated. These woods and fields, a little below Mill Crick,

were infested with wild beasts, frequented by Indians and tramps, and considered far from safe. Nor did the house bear a good character; terrible reports about it had frightened away tenants. It was said to be haunted, and that in the night dreadful howlings and moanings were to be heard, which redoubled on the arrival of the Sisters. Mother Duchesne was not a person to be frightened by noises: she reassured her companions, and set herself to watch for the ghosts. They turned out at last to be a troop of wild cats, which jumped every night from the neighbouring trees into the house, and held their revels in the empty rooms. They were forthwith driven away and the orphans sent for. Many of the inhabitants of St. Louis, who had not forgotten Madame Duchesne, hastened to visit and to help her. The new curé, M. Saulnier, sent her a cow, fruit and vegetables from his garden, and some furniture for the community and the little school, for there were neither beds nor chairs in the house. Mgr. Rosati came to bless it, and henceforward Mother Duchesne resided there, leaving Fleurissant to Madame Mathevon.

The orphanage was soon installed, but the opening of the young ladies' school was delayed till the arrival of several Sisters expected from France. Mesdames Dutour, Piveteau, Xavier Vandamne, and Louise Dorival arrived at New York in the early part of the autumn. The latter, who was going to Grand Coteau, parted with her companions at the junction of the Ohio, and the others appeared at St. Louis on the 9th of September, feast of the Holy Name of Mary—their guiding star in the long wearisome voyage they had made. They brought with them a letter from Mother Barat, in which she beseeches the American colony to be the *corps d'élite* of the Society; and one from Father Varin written in the same spirit. "My dear child," he says to Madame Duchesne, "how long I have been silent, but not before God! Every day that poor Louisiana

is present to my thoughts. It is always in the depths of my heart. I take it with me to the altar, and I offer it up with intense love to the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ. May it be His, and may His spouses be the instruments of this conquest. It was with great pleasure I heard that you have at last an establishment at St. Louis, now an episcopal see. This is the foundation which hitherto had been wanting to the edifice. What a joy it gives us also to see the little colony which starts this evening at six o'clock for dear Louisiana. How ardently I could wish, in spite of age and infirmities, to go and see with my own eyes, in the United States, the progress of the work of God which has sprung up in our own land." And then he adds in his usual strain: "Oh, how good God is! What great things He has done for our Society! And after so many prodigies of grace how could we be wanting in faith and in trust? How could we help being deeply grateful? Oh, once again let us say it, how good God is! Courage and confidence! —that is our motto until death!"

And then the Abbé Perreau sought to impress Mother Duchesne with the idea that America was to make up to our Lord for all He was losing through the impiety of Europe. "Before long," he said, "you will be better off than we are and more free to do good." The fearful crisis which the Church was undergoing in 1827 made the new world appear as a place of refuge. To Madame Duchesne's hands the highest hopes of the Society were consigned.

When this valiant woman took possession of her house and her large garden, she wrote to the Mother General that she was beginning to look like a countess. But great and severe privations were in store for her in this new home. For want of a ciborium, which they were too poor to purchase, the Blessed Sacrament could not be reserved; and when this difficulty was overcome, the chapel was so miserably ill-adapted for the purpose that the loving heart of the

poor Superior felt grieved and ashamed. It was a sort of damp cellar which had formerly been a kitchen, and where toads and reptiles crawled about the floor. Whilst she was making her adoration a crowd of gigantic spiders kept singing like little birds. From time to time a Father came on foot, and fasting, from Fleurissant, towards twelve o'clock, to say Mass and communicate the Sisters if they were still fasting. And then one day the Father Rector wrote that they must not reckon any more for Mass upon him or his priests, who were going to make their third year's probation. "I cried very bitterly that day," Madame Duchesne said, "for we live here in a state of constant privation. We have had no feast of Corpus Christi—no feast of the Sacred Heart. We often miss four Communions a week, and those are fasting days for me. I cannot make up my mind to break my fast, as I always hope that some providential circumstance will bring a priest to give us Holy Communion."

The Father Rector compassionated this holy suffering, and wrote: "You must believe me when I say that we earnestly desire to do all in our power for you. If, at present, circumstances preclude us from doing what we should wish, I am glad to think that ere long we shall be able to do more. I pray that you may increase in number, and that our Lord will make use of your Society to inflame with His love the hearts of thousands of men."

Soon afterwards help received from France enabled Madame Duchesne to build a house in which room for a good chapel was first thought of. Mass was said in it more regularly, and she was able to resume her habits of intimate intercourse with her Divine Lord. The day-school and the boarding-school both rapidly increased. The classes for the poor especially rejoiced the heart of the Superior. She wrote at that time to Mother Barat: "Every Sunday after the services we give religious instruction to the Mulattoes.

What with our schools and our orphanage we have the care of more than sixty children, whom we have the happiness of training in the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Of course there is more labour than profit in all these works; but this is all the better for Heaven, and it gladdens me to think of it."

Now that the house at St. Louis was founded, the whole of the valley of the Mississippi up to the Missouri was, as it were, occupied by stations of the Sacred Heart. Ten years of obscure and laborious efforts had brought about this result, and laid the foundation of the reign of Christ in those regions.

At Fleurissant Madame Mathevon delighted in her Indian scholars. "My Sisters," she wrote, "quite envy my happiness. I am quite elated with it. My only pleasure is to be with my young savages, or to teach the Catechism to my little boys, who call me their mother and clap their hands when I approach." The effect on the village was surprising. Conversions amongst the parents were frequent. One hundred and fifty persons were baptized in 1826, and the number of Communions in the neighbourhood had increased by one-third.

Grand Coteau was also flourishing under Madame Murphy's government. Its generous benefactress, Mrs. Charles Smith, was every day more kind and more devoted to her beloved foundation. One day that she was going away for a little while, she was heard to say, as she knelt at the altar and kissed the steps with tears: "Dearly loved house, it is here I leave my heart."

Even Protestants were attracted by the virtues of the Superior, and placed their daughters under her care. They often said that Madame Murphy made virtue loveable. Father von Quickenborn, though little given to praise, congratulated her upon the success of her establishment; and Mgr. Rosati, at his return from a visit to the Opelousas,

wrote as follows to Mother Duchesne: "What a consolation it is to all the friends of the Church to see the prosperity of these houses and the blessings God showers upon them! If I had met with no other satisfaction during my visit than the sight of all the good that goes on there, I should feel that it quite repaid my trouble. Three convert ladies baptized, Confirmation given to fifteen scholars—a great deal of piety, of regularity, and contentment. What more could we wish? Thus God helps us."

In Lower Louisiana, St. Michel, though so recently founded, had already recruited subjects for the Society. Madame Murphy wrote that Mother Audé's house seemed destined to give nuns to the Sacred Heart, whilst her own made Christians; but all for the same end—the greater glory of God.

Mgr. Rosati, after visiting that foundation, expressed his admiration to Mother Barat in the following terms: "It is evident that God has designs of mercy on this country, seeing that He gives us not only the benefits of a first-rate and at the same time Christian education, but also the inestimable blessing of a great many vocations to the religious life, which is something quite unheard of hitherto in this country. . . The good that is done is great, and what we may expect still greater."

Three days after the date of this letter the house of St. Michel lost its Assistant, Madame Xavier Hamilton, and on the 2nd of May Madame Audé wrote these touching lines to Mother Barat: "Our angel of peace is no more! The Lord called her to Himself yesterday morning, the 1st of May, 1827. At three o'clock in the morning, after receiving the last sacraments, she gave me her cold hand, and said: 'I am dying. In a few moments I shall be with God.' She then took her cross, pressed it to her lips, looked at me as if to take a final leave, uttered the name of Jesus with her dying voice, and breathed her last sigh."

This holy religious, whom Madame Duchesne called the American Aloysia, had never ceased to advance in the love of God and in devotion to the Society of the Sacred Heart. A short time before her death she had written to the Mother General: "The barriers which nature has opposed to our meeting on earth cannot check the feelings of a heart united to yours in the love of Jesus for time and eternity. It is there I hope to see and to know the Mother who is to me God's representative on earth."

These holy lives and holy deaths, these lessons and examples, educations, and vocations all tended to the same object—the progress of the Catholic religion in the new world. Mgr. Rosati says as much in a letter to France. "In spite of all the Protestant prejudices against nuns, they no sooner saw a convent at work and the progress girls make in these holy houses in virtue and in knowledge than they began to praise them, and to send their daughters to religious schools. Providence has greatly favoured our diocese in this respect." The true faith was making great conquests also in the neighbouring dioceses. In that of Cincinnati Bishop Fenwick, Provincial of the Dominicans, had almost entirely converted his episcopal city. "We find the following words in Mother Duchesne's journal: "We learn with joy the progress of the faith in the State of Ohio since Dr. Fenwick is Bishop of Cincinnati. The piety of the faithful there reminds one of that of the first Christians. Some of them fast till sunset."

From Illinois Madame Duchesne received letters from the Abbé Martial, who related to her the wonderful works accomplished by Mgr. Flaget, Bishop of Bardstown. "You would marvel," he said, "and be quite at a loss to understand how, in so short a time, and with such slender means, that good Mgr. Flaget has been able to perform such prodigies. Living in his seminary as austerely, and more austerely, than a seminarist, this holy prelate inspires all

around him with a love of poverty and mortification, and with the savings which a life of privations daily procures, the most useful establishments for religion and society are founded. On every side one hears nothing but thanksgivings for what Providence has granted to this country. The priests have one heart and one soul, and their devotion to their head is such that each one would give his life for him."

Indiana was also spiritually prospering under the same pastor, and especially the little town of Vincennes, where the zeal of the Abbé Blanc was rewarded by many consolations. Dioceses were multiplying in every direction. The States of Alabama and Florida had been governed by Vicars-Apostolic since 1826. In 1829 Mgr. Portier became Bishop of a diocese which included those two provinces. The eight States which were originally comprised in the immense diocese of New Orleans were now all provided with priests, and in a flourishing condition.

But, alas! he who had been the life and soul of this religious development was no longer at the head of it. Mgr. Dubourg had left America, suddenly abandoning the gigantic work he had so long and successfully carried on. He had been struggling with many difficulties and embarrassments, both exterior and interior, exposed to very bitter trials, assailed by treacherous as well as open enmity, and sacrilegiously plundered; the great missionary, wearied out, had returned to France, where he was made Bishop of Montauban, and afterwards transferred to the See of Besançon.

Mother Duchesne always remained his faithful friend. In October 1828 she wrote to him: "Surely, Monseigneur, you cannot forget the land which you watered with your tears and fertilized by your toils, and the people so long under your care, who still turn in spirit to the pastor to whom they owe everything. Rebellious as they may sometimes have seemed to the voice of their shepherd, they

are not ungrateful. Your name is always pronounced with veneration in this country."

We too cannot speak of Mgr. Dubourg without deep veneration and gratitude. He was certainly one of the greatest promoters of the restoration of Catholic missions in Louisiana and Missouri at the commencement of this century. We not only admire, but we must pity also this great servant of God, for it is sad when a general is compelled by his wounds to withdraw from the field of battle before victory is won, or for the reaper to leave the harvest he has planted before the corn is gathered in. At the same time we cannot but feel, even whilst paying a just tribute to this brave and apostolic missionary, that there are other servants of God whose glory is in His eyes and those of men more complete and entire—labourers who after putting their hand to the plough never drew back for a single moment, never took heed of the thorns in their way, never balanced the chances of success, but regardless of the reward to come, pressed forward indefatigably, and worked in the field of their Heavenly Father till there they found a glorious grave.

Mother Duchesne felt very lonely after the Bishop's departure. She wrote at that time to Mother Barat: "We have now no zealous friends here except our Lord. All other support seems to grow weaker and to disappear," in another letter she says, "I feel very much alone in the world, and I think God will suffer this to be the case until the end of my life. Attached as I am to this country, where the devotion which unites us in one family is daily increasing, I wish that it were possible to do away with distance, so that in reality I might once more sit at your feet, as I so often do in spirit. I feel the want of opening my heart to you so as to strengthen my soul. When I think of the happy days on the mountain, how often I regret not to have made better use of them."

Mother Barat's answer was full of the kind of sympathy which soothes and strengthens. She wrote in reply some months afterwards, "Yes, my dear Philippine, once we dwelt together on Mount Thabor; the vision was a brief one. Since that time we have had to make our abode on Mount Calvary It is there that a spouse of the Sacred Heart must expect to live and die. Let us take courage. The end is fast approaching. We are growing old, and death will soon come and unite us to life. . . . You feel lonely, dear Philippine; I hope Jesus will supply for all that you miss. It is with Him, and with Him only, that solitude does not exist, for to tell you the truth, the longer we live with our fellow-creatures the more detached we are from them. Your Mother, surrounded as she is with much love, feels this same kind of isolation. I have never said this to anybody but you. Few people could understand it. And yet it is a precious gift. *God alone!*"

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Foundation at Bayou la Fourche. Return and Foundation at St. Charles. Mother Duchesne visits the Houses of Louisiana. The Council of St. Michel.*

1828—1829.

Two more works, two foundations, complete what we may call the period of achievements in Mother Duchesne's apostolic life. The first was only a trial suggested by her intense love for a poor obscure and laborious life. The second was a spontaneous return to the scene of her first efforts. Equally prompted by the ardent zeal of the servant of God, the results of these two undertakings were dissimilar.

In a large village called Bayou la Fourche, about two leagues from New Orleans, a community of teaching nuns, called Daughters of the Cross, had existed for some years, having been first established by the Abbé Nerinckx at Loreto in Kentucky. They led a life in accordance with their name. Mother Duchesne admired, and thus describes it: "These Sisters live in a very austere manner. They are completely veiled, have neither shoes or stockings to their feet, and do every kind of hard work, ploughing, sowing, reaping, &c. They have already several houses, and in a few years their number has increased to one hundred. They instruct the poor, teach them to work, and do good in all sorts of ways. They are longing to be employed in the mission to the Osages, and to undertake there the education of girls. I foresee that they will take

the lead in many good works that we love, but cannot carry out. Their rules are better adapted than ours to the poverty and habits of this country. Every half hour a bell rings in their house, reminding them to make the ejaculation, 'O suffering Jesus! O sorrowful Virgin!' At stated times they all sing the same hymns without interrupting their different occupations, whether in the kitchen or the fields. The first establishment of these Sisters in our diocese will be at Les Barreins, and thence they will colonize."

The community of the Daughters of the Cross at La Fourche was directed by the Abbé Bigeschi, Curé of the Assumption, and was composed of nine Sisters at the head of a school, which numbered at that time not more than nine pupils. Mgr. Rosati ascribed the slow progress of this little institution to the fact that these Sisters did not speak French, the ordinary language of the country, and he asked the Sacred Heart to undertake the direction of the community and the school by admitting these holy Sisters into their Society. This request was simultaneously made to the Mother General by Mgr. Dubourg, Bishop of Montauban, and Mother Duchesne. The former wrote: "Mother Duchesne, burning as she is with zeal for the glory of God, and perfectly well acquainted with the country in question, conceived some years ago the idea of forming a congregation of Sisters for the instruction of poor children in villages. I had always looked upon that venerable Mother as a person specially guided by the Spirit of God for the spiritual good of Louisiana. You have also a special grace for the direction of your Society, . . . and I accordingly hoped that Mother Duchesne's project would one day become a germ likely to bear very great fruit. It seems to me that the time for it has arrived. Providence has assembled together a certain number of holy young women, and procured them a house and

means of existence. It seems as if it committed them now to your direction, so that you may train them in the manner most conducive to their own sanctification and that of others. I entreat you to pray and reflect upon it. Do not, if you are afraid of it, at once affiliate them, but be content to make a trial. Experience will then enlighten you as to God's intentions."

Mother Barat hesitated, and doubted whether it would not be wiser to adhere to the resolution not to found any more houses except in central places. And then the proximity of La Fourche to St. Michel would perhaps injure the latter establishment if both received pupils. Nothing but the pressing entreaties of the Bishops could have induced Mother Barat to allow one of her daughters, Madame Hélène Dutour, to go from St. Louis to La Fourche for the purpose of effecting this union and foundation. She was very particular about specifying the nature of this establishment: "It would be quite contrary to my intention," she wrote to Madame Audé, "if La Fourche were to be placed on the same level as your school. It must be on a lower scale, and besides religion and needlework the teaching in that establishment ought to be limited to reading, writing, and summing. In that way it will not injure your school. If more is attempted it will be necessary to build, and then there will be debts, and both houses in consequence in difficulties perhaps for years." If this wise advice had been followed the house at La Fourche would have been saved in the sequel much painful embarrassment.

The second work undertaken by Mother Duchesne, and in which she personally exerted herself, was connected with recollections most dear to her heart. This was a renewal of the work at St. Charles in Missouri.

In 1825 she had written: "Poor America! How sad it is to think that between us and Canada, and to the west as

far as the Pacific Ocean, there is not a single church or priest! yet it is reckoned that twenty-three thousand souls have come into Missouri from the east in the course of this year. And on the banks of the Missouri and the Mississippi there are French and Irish populations that never hear anything about religion."

The Jesuits, however, had just established themselves at St. Charles, and made it their headquarters in the midst of the savage tribes and the emigrants from the east and from Europe. They had built a church in stone, and laboured to erect it, not only as architects, but as masons and carpenters. But their apostolate could not bear lasting results except by means of Christian schools, and they accordingly pressed the nuns of the Sacred Heart to return to St. Charles, where they had provided means for their establishment.

Mother Duchesne records in her journal on the 25th of March, 1828, that the Father Superior was proceeding to the Osages, and that before his departure he had sent them a deed of donation of their former house at St. Charles, which he had bought for them, and where he invited them to settle.

Mother Barat was all the more in favour of this foundation on account of the precarious position of her houses in France. She wrote on the 6th of June, 1828, "We are threatened with great calamities. In case they overtake us we shall send you subjects. This is an additional reason for accepting St. Charles."

On the 15th of the same month Mgr. Rosati, Father Van Quickenborn, and Mother Duchesne went to St. Charles to organize the new establishment. When the most necessary repairs were effected, two of her best-loved daughters, Madame Berthold and Madame Mathevon, joined her to begin the work. This was on the 10th of October. They went from St. Louis to Fleurissant, where Mgr. Rosati was

waiting for them, and travelled on with him, the Rector of the Jesuits, some of his Fathers, and three secular priests, to the town of St. Charles, if a large village which boasted of a single street can be dignified by that name.

When at eight in the morning and on a beautiful day they arrived, the whole population of the place was looking out for the nuns. Scanty indeed was the amount of things they brought with them, "four sheets, six towels, four blankets, two mattresses, four cups, six plates, a coffee pot, a boiling pot, one pound of tea, twelve pounds of rice, a pillow case filled with sugar and another with coffee, a bottle of wine for the altar, and one of vinegar." Such was the list of their worldly possessions, a poor beginning for a foundation. Their house itself was a small building made of planks, which since they had left it had been turned into a cattle shed. But this wretched abode was soon to be honoured with a special privilege. On the temporary altar which they erected on the morning after their arrival was laid for several days the body of a martyr, St. Adeodatus, which was to be placed in the parish church then building. It was solemnly consecrated on the following Sunday by Mgr. Rosati, and then Mother Duchesne and Mother Berthold returned to St. Louis, leaving Mother Mathevon Superior at St. Charles with only one other nun, Mary Ann O'Connor, and with nothing in hand but four piastres, about twenty francs, but an inexhaustible fund of confidence in God.

Madame Lucile Mathevon was a valiant woman. A few days afterwards she wrote to Mother Duchesne: "My dear Reverend Mother, I cannot say that I suffer from poverty, considering that we have all we want. We are always in good spirits, and ready to suffer whatever God may ordain so that we can get others to love His Sacred Heart, or rather I should say begin ourselves to be true Christians. . . . We are all day at work with axes and saws

and trowels in our hands. We have baked bread for a week. You would hardly recognize our house, transformed as it is by our efforts. It is a little palace where peace and charity reign under the protection of the Hearts of our Divine Lord, of Mary our Mother, and our holy patron saints."

In a letter to the Mother General she says that the mothers of families at St. Charles who remembered the teachers of the first school ten years before, hastened to send their children to the nuns. They soon had between forty and fifty children in their day-school.

On Sundays more than three hundred persons came to Mass. "All over the town," Madame de Mathevon wrote, "nothing is heard now but hymns to the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Virgin."

Mother Duchesne did indeed suspect her dear daughter Lucile of seeing things in rather too bright a light. But that readiness to hope and that spirit of thanksgiving are often exactly what draws down God's blessing on a work. And most satisfactory results made Mother Barat write to Mother Duchesne in April, 1829: "I hold very much to St. Charles, and I am glad we have a house there. It will do more good perhaps than any of our other establishments." The increase in the work imperatively required more subjects to carry it on, and in June the Mother General despatched three more nuns to America. "The Mothers I send you," she wrote to her friend, "will embrace you for me. Oh, if I could be in their place for a few hours and spend some time with you. Pray that God in His mercy may give me the happiness of one day seeing you again."

The new detachment consisted of Madame Thiéfry, Madame Félicité Lavy, and Madame Julie Bazire. They left Havre on the 8th of July, arrived at New York on the 16th of August, and at St. Louis on the 11th of September.

They were accompanied by the Abbé Delacroix, who had spent a year in Belgium, and somewhat improved in health by his native air, was returning to consecrate the rest of his life to his mission in Louisiana.

Six houses of the Sacred Heart were now established along the whole line of the Valley of the Mississippi, beginning at St. Michel and ending at St. Charles. The Superior General who watched from a distance with dispassionate clear sightedness the course of affairs, was of opinion that this part of America was sufficiently provided for. "Our friends," she wrote, "are satisfied that Louisiana has now houses enough, and that we must let things remain as they are at any rate for some years. We must soon turn our thoughts towards the eastern States, but we shall not move in that direction till our houses are sufficiently full to allow of Sisters being sent to some large town which would wish to have us. It is supposed that this may be the case at New York." Subsequent events justified the expectations of the Mother General. An important object had now to be considered. It is not enough for a foundress to create establishments, she must also direct and sustain them. Six houses now existing, it was necessary to institute amongst them unity of spirit and of government. With this view Mother Barat desired the Superiors in Louisiana to meet in a sort of provincial council presided over by Mother Duchesne. This task was a difficult one, and Mother Duchesne felt from the first an insuperable repugnance to it which we shall see was well founded. In the first place she alleged the obstacles which her own character presented to the fulfilment of the part of moderator in the projected council. "It is my misfortune," she wrote, "that I have not always before my eyes those pages which you gave me at Grenoble on the exterior of Jesus Christ. Oh, that there was not such a complete contrast between me and my Master and example, and also with my dear

Mother who never breaks the bruised reed! Do," she adds, "consent to whatever the Mothers of Louisiana will regulate amongst themselves. As to me I am only a worn out staff, good for nothing but to be thrown away. I look on myself as an old lion without any strength to act, and that everything overwhelms and irritates."

But Mother Barat had already given orders to the other Superiors which assigned to Mother Duchesne a predominant position. She wrote to Madame Eugénie Audé: "She has a right to it as your senior, and the one to whom God originally intrusted this mission. And moreover she has both virtue and experience."

Mother Duchesne was obliged to submit. But one thing she stipulated, and that was that the Superiors of Lower Louisiana should not come to her when she could very well go to them. She had told the Mother General that "Mothers Xavier and Eugénie had thought of making the journey, but that it was better to consider the larger houses than hers, which was so insignificant, and to risk the health of an old creature like herself, than to expose to so much fatigue two persons of an age to render great services to the Society."

And so undeterred by the painful recollections of her last terrible journey in Louisiana, Mother Duchesne left St. Louis on the 7th of November, 1829, and proceeded to New Orleans, and then to St. Michel. The only thought that supported her was that of doing the work of the Society, but her heart was heavy, and this délicate mission was a great cross to her. In the month of December, and on the anniversary day of Mother Barat's arrival at Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut, she wrote to her dear Mother General: "Since that day and the one when I was admitted into the Society my happiness has gone on increasing with its extension. And what did we seek in it but the glory of Jesus? It has had to go through many

trials, but His Heart has always delivered it. Such were the conditions of our alliance. When reading the chapter on 'the royal way of the Cross,' I adopted for myself this ejaculation, *Portavi et portabo.*"

From her bed of suffering to which she was confined by the results of a severe fall, Mother Barat thus answered this letter: "I see, my dear child, that you have your crosses. Oh, if I were to give you a slight idea of those God bestows on the Society! Let us then be courageous and embrace them up to our very last breath." And then she adds: "What remembrances you wake up in me. What happy moments we spent on that quiet solitary mountain of yours. Times are indeed changed. For my part I live in the midst of a turmoil of business and dignities, which I try to escape from as much as I can. Often as a rest to my mind I think of and envy your wide forests and the banks of the Mississippi. Shall I ever behold them?"

Mother Duchesne's visitation began by St. Michel, where the other Superiors met her. It was the first time she had seen that house, which had greatly prospered under Mother Audé's government. It numbered at that time sixty-two pupils, of whom she gave the following satisfactory account: "Our children are very obedient and inclined to piety. All those who have been here, with one exception, go regularly to the sacraments. Many of them come here to go to Confession and Communion. They are very much attached to our house, and always speak of it with enthusiastic gratitude. We have completely our own way with the parents, who accept and like our system of education." Comprising the novices there were twenty-two Religious in that commmunity. "Our novices," Mother Audé wrote, "make every day greater efforts to advance in virtue. They often seek rather than avoid humiliations. Whatever we ask of them they do. There is never any opposition. Everything is done heartily and readily." One

of these novices was called Sophie, and another Philippine, in honour of Mother Barat and Mother Duchesne.

The key-stone of this prosperous establishment was the Superior, whose attachment to the Society was unbounded. We find the following words in one of her letters to the Mother General: "You know, dear Reverend Mother, that my vocation for America was not one of attraction. It was and always will be a vocation of obedience and faith—of obedience to my Reverend and dear Mother Barat, and of faith and trust that wherever she sends me I shall always find the Society of the Sacred Heart. The Society is my pole star, and you, dear Mother, are the magnet which will keep me from ever leaving it."

The principal object of the council of St. Michel was to establish in all the American houses a uniform observance of the rules and customs of the Society. One of the chief questions Mother Barat had recommended to its consideration related to the dispensations necessitated by the spirit of the country. Mother Duchesne held to a strict observance, but for many reasons, which we must explain, her authority was more or less paralyzed by a state of things which the Superiors in France could hardly realize.

At that time, and until 1839, all the houses of the Sacred Heart, in the new world as well as in the old, were governed directly by the Mother General, who still found it possible to fulfil this task. In fact as well as by right she was looked upon as the only real Superior, and a feeling of filial affection and veneration made all her daughters naturally wish to deal directly with so wise and holy a Mother. This was especially the case with Madame Audé whose devoted attachment to Mother Barat inclined her to look unfavourably at anything which seemed to come between her and that beloved Superior. "I consult our good Mother Duchesne," she wrote, "about spiritual matters, for in those she excels." But about other matters she did

not consult her at all. In this delicate position Mother Duchesne had no support when she advised or decided anything, but a somewhat vague mandate emanating from the personal desire of the Superior General, but with no foundation in the statutes or precedent in the experience of the Society. Hence arose wise as well as humble misgivings which had made her shrink from a presidency that was in fact more honorary than real. She was called upon to take her place in a council where everything was to be decided by plurality of votes, and where she had no other authority than that afforded by her experience, which could indeed be supposed to have given her valuable lights, but on the other hand, had not always proved successful enough to be appealed to as conclusive. She had then but too much reason to fear that her way of acting would be considered very severe at St. Michel, where Madame Audé, in a much easier manner, achieved such brilliant results. She explains this in a letter to Mother Barat. "What influence could I expect to have in a house where within and without there is nothing but admiring approval? I gave advice, but felt convinced that I must keep myself aloof and interfere only as a friend and Sister." Still she requested the suppression of public examinations, performances, and distribution of prizes, which had been already prohibited by the decisions of the councils in France. In 1835, a circular from the Mother General renewed the injunction in a special manner to the houses in America.

The second house Mother Duchesne visited was Bayou la Fourche. It was intended with regard to the teaching, the number and the rank of the scholars, to be a sort of middle school, but was accused of assuming at a ruinous expense, a position which was likely to prove dangerous to its own interests as well as to those of St. Michel. The real or pretended justification of this state of things was founded on the national spirit of equality. "No doubt," it was

alleged, "that it would be better for the orphan children of the poor Acadians, and more desirable for their future interest to learn here to spin and to comb wool, to work in the fields, to take care of the cows. But if we were to set our orphans to do any of these things, the public who clamour for equality would immediately cry out against us." In spite of these plausible arguments and the authorization which the Superior alleged that she had received directly from Paris, Mother Duchesne thought herself obliged to abide by what the Mother General had written to her on the subject, and regulated the studies, the dress, and the work of the house according to the footing on which it had been intended to place it.

From the 20th of December, 1829, to the 19th of January, 1830, Mother Duchesne remained at Grand Coteau where Mother Murphy was Superior. After that visit she wrote: "Mother Murphy is the one of our Mothers with whom I can communicate most intimately. We could not help wishing that we might be together at St. Louis, but how could her place be filled up at the Opelousas?"

This Irish nun had indeed one of those souls which irresistibly attract. The simplicity of a child was united in her character with the zeal of an apostle and the courage of a martyr. The time she had spent in Paris at the novitiate had attached her in the strongest manner to Mother Barat. She did not know how to leave off when she wrote to her, in very bad French indeed, but with warm-hearted affection. But to this childlike spirit was joined a wonderful energy of faith. Poverty was her delight. She told the Mother General that for four months she had felt the greatest joy in wearing the cast off shoes of some of her scholars. Though almost always ill from the climate, she declared that her soul was perfectly happy and peaceful. "I find it difficult to write on account of the fever I con-

tinually suffer from. My soul is, I think, stronger than my body, for my mind is always at peace. It seems to me that the more imperfect I am, the more God loves me."

At the time of Mother Duchesne's visit she was very ill, and afterwards she wrote :

"This incessant fever weakens me very much, but for the good of a House it is well for the Superior to suffer. Pray, my dear Mother, that God may give me strength to be a perfect victim for His greater glory."

Under such a Mistress the school at Grand Coteau equalled the one at St. Michel both as to virtue and studies. It inspired so much confidence that parents from all parts of the States wanted to send their children to the Sacred Heart. And when there was no room for new pupils, even though the buildings had been recently increased, they used to beseech the Superior to receive their daughters. "She can sleep on the floor," they said ; "anywhere you like, so that she is with you and at the Sacred Heart." And, indeed, as one of the pupils afterwards said, they slept on the floor in the garret, in the huts, in the infirmaries, and "we were so happy," she adds, "that no home, however comfortable or luxurious, could make us wish to leave our dear convent."

And if the children praised their Mistress, the Mistress, on the other hand, congratulated herself on the goodness of her pupils. "I am always with them," she writes, "and a look is enough for them, they are all so obedient. . . . The house has made quite an extraordinary new start. The studies of this year have been excellent." A great many Protestant children were received into the Church, and others carried back with them to their homes the firm determination to become Catholics. Mother Duchesne, delighted at what she saw in all these ways, expressed to her daughters her warm satisfaction, but with her holy passion for regular observance, and feeling herself bound by

her position to maintain it, she noticed with regret in the Mistresses and pupils a spirit of liberty rather too much in accordance with the ideas of the country. She was surprised to see that they all walked about the unenclosed woods and fields of their huge property where they sometimes met strangers, and was also startled at the great concessions made to Protestant parents with a view to the eventual conversion of their children. The Pope had been consulted on the admission of this class of pupils, and had sanctioned it. Mme. Dorival, the Mother Assistant at Grand Coteau, had written some time before: "Many Protestant families send their children to our school on account of the freedom of spirit as to religious matters which we must profess to observe in this country. By this means several of these children eventually become Catholics."

But the question arose whether a justifiable tolerance had not degenerated into excess, and been the means of diminishing the religious spirit of the school. Such, at any rate, was Mother Duchesne's impression. Her earnest faith was pained at the small comparative share religion had in the education of the children. "I am ashamed to say," she wrote to Mother Barat, "that there seems a fear of talking to them of God, or of insisting on their learning the catechism. I saw them laugh when I knelt down to say the *Veni Sancte Spiritus.* The mixture of religion produces a deplorable tepidity about the true faith."

Since then the Sacred Heart has legislated more precisely on this difficult and delicate question. It admits Protestants into its schools only in small number compared to that of the Catholic pupils, and on condition that they conform to the general rules as to religious intruction and exercises. At the time we are speaking of, a certain number of regulations were drawn up and submitted to Mother Barat, who on account of the circumstances granted a simple permission to her daughters not to insist on the

Protestant children learning the catechism, and to allow the prayers to be said in English instead of Latin. This was all she could concede, believing as she did that the open, complete, and constant practice of the Catholic religion in a Catholic school is a source of edification, and not of scandal to good Protestant parents. As to the walks in the fields, she said that for the time being they might walk in an unenclosed wood; but in another letter, added that the permission was only temporary, and that she would refer it to the decision of the General Council.

In the midst of the anxious questions she had to consider, Mother Duchesne's charitable feelings, always so predominant in her loving though strong nature, led her to press earnestly the point of better sleeping accommodation for the Lay-sisters in some of the houses she visited. She was grieved to see them, from want of room, crowded together in cold garrets, and pointed out the necessity of providing them with better cells. Uncompromising and almost stern as to everything relating to God's honour and strict observance, her heart overflowed with tenderness towards those of her Sisters whose lives and avocations she thought most consonant with the lowly humility of her Divine Lord.

A circumstantial report of the Council of St. Michel and Mother Duchesne's visits was sent by her to Mother Barat. The Superior General could hardly quite enter into the difficulties of the task her daughter had been assigned, and wondered that such a wise and energetic Visitor had not acted more decidedly and effectually. "Your journey," she wrote to her, "has, I have no doubt, been of use, but it would have been still more useful if you had followed the plan I suggested—that is, to hold a council, over which you would have presided, and in which such and such points as to uniform and regular observance should have been decided by the plurality of votes. You have done what is essential,

but it seems to me that there is still a great deal of good to do."

Mother Barat's quick foresight enabled her to see the way in which that good was to be achieved. It had always been her dear Philippine's fate to run the hazards of untried missions, to meet with difficulties in the task of governing as in every other work, to affront them, and to bear the consequences of the shock. But the result of her experience enlightened others, and showed them the different and better way of proceeding which was to ensure success. This was probably in Mother Barat's thoughts when she wrote: "It will be absolutely necessary to have in Louisiana a Provincial with general and special powers enabling her to act according to necessity. The distance at which I am from that country may often prevent good being done, as you sometimes have to wait three months for an answer. We shall see in time what it will be well to regulate." As we shall now see, the General Council of 1833 settled that question.

This state of things increased Mother Duchesne's longings to return to her own community and its quiet life of poverty and recollection. "I do not know," she wrote to the Mother General, "if God will look favourably on my journey, which I liked only because it was your will I should undertake it. But my heart always inclines towards the poorest country, and that is the Missouri."

On the 19th of January, 1830, she left Grand Coteau in the midst of a violent storm and torrents of rain. A priest accompanied her, and a negro on horseback escorted them. Every moment the good priest made remarks little calculated to reassure his companion. "Look at that green spot, madame—it is a dangerous quagmire;" or, "There is the place where I saw a waggon for five hours stuck in the mud;" and again, "This is the wood where I was attacked in the night by a negro." Since her terrible journey of

1822, all that country seemed to Mother Duchesne a land of horrors.

At St. Michel she had made acquaintance with a missionary who had recently been in the north and the east, and the picture he drew of his journey through those States reawakened all her old predilections. This missionary was the Abbé Jeanjean, Vicar General of the recently-elected Bishop of New Orleans. "He comes from Canada," she wrote, "delighted and touched with all he has seen there; a numerous and learned clergy, a number of religious houses, well attended schools, and a practical faith in all classes of society. He said Mass in the celebrated congregation of the Iroquois, founded by the Jesuit Fathers whose very footsteps they worship. In the morning, when the bell rings, all the savages hasten to church. The men sit on one side, and the women on the other. The Christian doctrine is chanted in the Iroquois language. M. l'Abbé Jeanjean visited and prayed at the tomb of Marie Tegacuitha, the saint of that tribe. He saw the skull of Father Brébeuf, and lodged in the hut of Father Charlèvoix, visiting afterwards all the eastern side of the country, and the magnificent convents of the Sisters of Charity at Emettsburg and Baltimore, of the Visitation at Georgetown, and the Ursulines at Boston." These consoling accounts cheered the heart of the spouse of Christ. Whilst she was suffering and going through various trials, the work of God was progressing, and she could feel that not one pang or one prayer was endured or made in vain.

The Church of America was, indeed, entering on a new era. It had held its first Provincial Council at Baltimore, and the priest we have just alluded to had assisted at it as theologian. On the 4th of October, 1828, six Bishops in person, and four through their representatives, an administrating Bishop, and eleven theologians of different nations —American, French, Polish, Irish, Italian, and German,

had sat in council at the Cathedral of Baltimore, under the presidency of Archbishop Whitfield. It was the first time that the episcopacy of this new Christendom had met, and ascertained the immense progress it had made since the establishment of the Bishopric of Baltimore in 1789. We have already spoken of the increase in the west. In the east New York had thirty-three thousand Catholics, four churches, and ten priests; Philadelphia twenty-three thousand Catholics, four churches, and nine priests; Baltimore, eighteen thousand Catholics, four churches, and a seminary, five parish priests, eight devoted to teaching; Boston had five thousand Catholics, three churches, and four priests. The council consulted as to the means of bringing about a still wider extension of the faith. The education of youth, and in particular the multiplication of schools for girls seemed to the Bishops the most important measures for its promotion. The other points which had engaged their consideration were, unity in the prayers and the liturgy of their churches, uniformity in the catechisms, the rules of ecclesiastical discipline and precautions and remedies against the spirit of indifference, which, under the specious name of Liberalism, tended to mix up truth with error, and to represent all religions as good. Finally, the creation of a Catholic press had seemed to them the most powerful engine for the conversion of the country. The use of Catholic school-books was encouraged, a monthly review entitled the *Metropolitan* was set on foot in order to establish a link of correspondence between all the dioceses. Boston, Charlestown, and other cities had already religious periodicals of their own. M. Antoine Blanc, one of the theologians of this Assembly, wrote, "You cannot conceive how the appearance of these publications terrifies the Protestant sects, and likewise, how alarmed they are at the Provincial Council. They raise a cry of alarm in all their papers—'If we do not take care Popery will invade all the

country.' We are not frightened by these expressions of despair." As regards the Sacred Heart, we see by a letter from Mother Duchesne, that in its six houses there were sixty-four nuns and three hundred and fifty children, comprising pupils and day scholars. She was grateful for this result, which was preparing new conquests for the future.

Mother Duchesne remained three weeks at St. Michel, her return was delayed by the winter, which had chained up in ice the great river. At last, on the 5th of February, she started and proceeded safely as far as the Ohio, but after that time the want of water placed the boat in constant danger of being stranded. She then continued her journey in a cart drawn by oxen, and was well pleased that this circumstance enabled her to approach the sacraments at Barreins, where she was hospitably received by the Daughters of the Cross. After a short stay of a few hours at St. Geneviève, she arrived at St. Louis on the 27th of February, 1830.

The Council of St. Michel forms a sort of epoch in Mother Duchesne's apostolical career. It divides the first from the second part of her life in America. Notwithstanding the great qualities which she had evinced as Foundress, it did not seem as if she were meant to direct her own work in the days of prosperity, and her humility readily concluded that the time was arrived for her retirement from the scene of action, and withdrawal from a conspicuous position. After that last act of her government we find her till her death giving herself up to a life of silence and inward crucifixion, which was in the end to prove even more profitable to the extension of her Society. In the remaining chapters of this work, we shall have to study the details of this existence devoted to prayer, silence, and self-sacrifice.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*The cholera at Grand Coteau. Death of Madame Octavie Berthold. Suppression of the Convent of Sainte Marie at Grenoble. Mother Duchesne leaves St. Louis.*

1831—1834.

God, in His wonderful love for souls, spares nothing that can tend to conform them to His own Divine image. And as the history of our Lord on earth consists of a short period of active work placed between two phases, one of solitude and obscurity, and the other of suffering, so does it often happen that some of His most valiant servants in the work of apostleship are withdrawn after a while from the field of action, and thrown into the shade for some merciful purposes of His own. Doubtless one of those purposes is to perfect their virtue through trials, and by depriving them of the glory they seemed likely to gain on earth, to secure to them their full reward in Heaven. And in the second place, if it is true that for the salvation of souls more is to be obtained by suffering for them than even by speaking to them of God, it is probably one of the objects of such apparently strange dispensations to employ these chosen souls in a more efficacious manner than even in the work of evangelization. This process of entire death to self began in Mother Duchesne's case by an exterior privation of, and an inward detachment from everything which would still bind her to this world. She courted herself this change in her life. After her last visit to Lower Louisiana, she again urged the Mother General to remove her from the position

of Superior, and it seemed then as if the apparent failure of her mission justified the request. She had heard that a very holy nun was to be sent from France, and she hastened to write: "Do name her Superior here. I shall keep so quietly in a corner, that I shall not be at all in her way. I would add that I am ready to go anywhere, only I feel that from my seniority and my age I should be a burthen to a house. I cannot correspond with the parents. The English do not understand me, and the Creoles like a pleasing exterior. The only thing I can do is to teach a class, or nurse the sick. I say this quite plainly, as I should do it."

These repeated requests were making at last some impression on Mother Barat. She was inclined to believe what she heard from America as to the way in which Mother Duchesne, in her great humility, kept the house at St. Louis in a state of poverty which prevented parents of the best families from sending their children there. It was said that she had always before her eyes the first houses she had known in France, and considered them as a type from which no departure was justifiable, without considering that they were in quite an elementary position, and regardless of actual requirements; also that if this stagnation and adherence to the forms of an infant institution is always more or less objectionable, it was particularly so in America, where everything progresses and is transformed.

In the meantime Madame de Kersaint, the nun announced by Mother Barat, arrived on the 31st of August, with several other sisters. She was a native of Brittany, and worthy of that noble hearted country.

Mother Duchesne received these new daughters with all the warmth of her heart. Madame de Kersaint wrote: "That venerable Mother is a wonderful person for her age; she attends to everything, does everything, and thanks God for everything!" Mother Theresa had trained Madame de

Kersaint in the convent at Quimper. It seemed as if the time had arrived for the change which had been so often solicited. Still Mother Barat hesitated, and dreaded taking a step which she was told was necessary. Her keen spiritual perception made her feel that, after all, the unskilfulness of saints is better than the skilfulness of others. But when she once made up her mind, she spoke openly, and the quiet simplicity with which she expressed her thoughts and wishes to her old friend shows the sanctity of both these holy women. She wrote on the 30th of November, 1831: "From what I hear from America, I cannot but feel somewhat anxious as to the present state of your house. I have been grieved for some time past at its want of success, and the worry it causes you. I hoped that St. Louis would have established itself on the same footing as St. Michel and the Opelousas, and some of our friends had led me to expect it. But from what I read it seems to me that we shall never arrive at that result, if we do not adopt a plan which I must submit to you for the sake of a greater good. . . . It is to place Mother Thiéfry at St. Louis instead of you, giving her Mother de Kersaint as Assistant, and perhaps Madame Régis for Mistress General. You, dear Mother, would in that case retire to St. Charles, or Fleurissant, or wherever you thought you could be of most use."

Mother Barat then alluded to the old-fashioned system of Government which Mother Duchesne was accused of adhering to. "God forbid, dear Mother, that I should blame you! I know all you have done, and all you have suffered; but changes will take place as time goes on, and we must also modify and change our way of acting." And she ends by saying: "Oh, my dear Philippine, how many and how increasing are our crosses. God is bent on detaching us from earth in order to purify our souls and prepare them for eternity. May He be for ever blest!"

Mother Duchesne's answer was as calm and serene as

her Superior's letter. "I have received," she wrote, "your letter of the 30th of November, in which you speak of your new plan for the house of St. Louis. My taste for what is mean will make me think every position good as long as I am not idle. And even if that is to be my lot, I also think that God's grace would enable me to bear it. I am quite certain that I have not a talent for governing, and I have prayed earnestly for some time past for the arrival of one who will establish regularity, and at the same time win the hearts of those under her rule."

This acquiescence seemed to clench the matter. But doubt and a lingering regret still made Mother Barat hesitate. In this uncertainty, as a last expedient, she bethought herself of submitting her decision to the Bishop of St. Louis; she wrote to Mother Duchesne that she was to consult with him and abide by his advice. The Bishop's opinion decidedly was that she should remain at her post. He did not, however, inform her that such was his advice, but said he would write to the Mother General, and that nothing was to be done till her answer came. His letter was as follows:

"Madame, after seriously reflecting on the plan that you are kind enough to submit to me, I have begged Mother Duchesne to delay its execution until I have heard from you. . . . In the first place, I do not think that any of your religious would inspire the same amount of confidence as Mother Duchesne deservedly enjoys in this country. All who know her respect and venerate her virtues, which, together with her advanced age and the experience she has acquired by her long residence in this country, have given her a great influence. There are few persons whom I hold in such veneration as this holy nun, who has the spirit of a true religious, and in many cirumstances known to myself has given conclusive proofs of it." The Bishop goes on to defend Mother Duchesne on the points which had been

complained of, and says that instead of being blamed for her administration, she ought to be pitied for what she had gone through. He ends his letter with these words: "The Sister whom you would place in her position would never be able to supply for her absence. Let us, then, follow the leadings of Providence. It will not fail to assist us."

This answer, and Mother Duchesne's submissive letter, did not reach Mother Barat till the beginning of May. It was a ray of light and consolation to the Mother General. From Aix, where she was staying then, she hastened to write the following lines to her dear Philippine:

"I yield to your Bishop's wishes all the more readily on account of the difficulty with which I had brought myself to a contrary decision. I simply gave way to your oft-repeated and earnest desires. And then many enlightened people seconded your view of the question. I am delighted to think, my dear child, that they were mistaken, and that it was only a feeling of humility which led you to make this request. I hope that God will assist and strengthen you as He has done up to this time in the exercise of so difficult an office. You must continue to fulfil it as long as you can. This is the desire of your Bishop, and mine likewise. It is satisfactory to me to feel that we are agreed on that point. In consequence of this decision we shall change nothing."

Mother Duchesne accordingly remained at her post. The time was not yet come for her to be relieved from it. She had yet known only half the tribulations inherent to Superiorship—those of privation, toil, and difficulties. She was now about to experience the far more poignant suffering of ruin, bereavements, separation, and death.

In 1832, the house of La Fourche had to be suppressed. This was the first blow of this sort Mother Duchesne had undergone. This house had become a crushing expense to the Society, and was given back to the Bishop of Orleans,

who established in it another religious community which succeeded in reviving the work, being able to furnish more subjects, and having greater means at its disposal.

A greater trial was the cholera. In the beginning of October, 1832, Mother Duchesne wrote to the Mother General: "The cholera is at St. Louis. Having made greater ravages in Canada than in Paris, in comparison to the population, it rages still more violently at St. Louis. Our children dispersed at the appearance of the epidemic, and the fear of it will continue, as far as one can foresee, for several months." She ends her letter with these words: "Let us bless God for all. He is always a Father, and most merciful. His Providence has hitherto protected us in a wonderful manner, for whilst people are dying about us in every direction, we have not had a single death in any of our three houses." It was not, however, to be always thus. In the month of June, 1833, Mother Duchesne learnt that the cholera was at St. Michel, and that four of the nuns had died. She wrote to the Mother General: "A Sister who came from the Opelousas brought me these tidings. But as it takes a month for a letter to come from St. Michel to St. Louis, I know nothing yet about Mother Eugénie, and I tremble for her and her school, for the cholera rages along the whole bank of the river."

A letter from Mother Audé soon informed her of the sad disasters in that house. There were about two hundred persons there, including the nuns and the children, when on the 30th of May, 1833, one of the Mistresses, Madame Vandamme, felt the first symptoms of the terrible disease. Another nun, Madame Thérèse Delchmendy, and then Sister Bariot sickened with it in the course of the day. Before the end of the night Madame Vandamme died, and the others were at the last extremity. Mother Eugénie Audé's courage rose with the emergency. She ordered the Sisters not to approach the beds of the sick, and nursed

them herself and alone by day and by night, refusing positively to be relieved from that dangerous office.

"To part," she said, "would be worse than to die." God has united us at the foot of His altar, and there we must live and die." Her friends renewed their entreaties. A house was ready for her, a steamer had been engaged for the removal of the community, but she would not hear of leaving St. Michel. "I would rather have been torn to pieces," she said, "than leave the bedside of my poor Sisters." Five more nuns and two orphans were taken ill, and Mother Audé going about among the dead and the dying, watched like a guardian angel over the last hours of these holy sufferers. One of the nuns wrote: "If I speak to you about the virtues of that Mother, nothing I must say that I have read in the lives of the greatest saints comes up to what I have seen her do in those terrible hours. I was amongst the sick, we were lodged in three different rooms, and she managed to take care of us all. It really seemed as if, like St. Francis Xavier, she was in several places at once. Always calm and serene, her cheerful countenance and manner encouraged even the weakest to bear up. She performed for us the most repulsive offices, and never took a moment's rest, for at the least sigh from one of her patients she hastened to her side. The little food she took was eaten in the sick room. Five of us received the last sacraments."

The great consolation which sweetened those sad hours was the Christian beauty of these holy deaths. "In those terrible moments," Madame Audé afterwards wrote: "God gave me a consolation which pervaded my inmost soul. It was to see the Sisters who were taken from me die like saints, and the others calm, resigned, even happy, expressing but one desire, and that was to die with their wills united to the will of Jesus, and not to belie in the least degree, and up to their last breath, the consecration they

had made of their whole being to His Divine Heart." In her last moments Sister Bariot said, "Oh, how happy I am going to be! What a beautiful day this is! I am going to see my God."

But if such deaths as these consoled Mother Audé with Divine hopes, it was impossible that as a Superior and a Mother she should not have felt them acutely. A mournful gloom seemed to have spread over her isolated house. This mental suffering, together with the fatigue of fourteen days and fourteen nights without repose, brought her to the verge of the grave. She said herself that she thought at that moment that her earthly exile was about to end, and when hardly convalescent she had the grief of seeing a Sister who had always been in excellent health suddenly die of a sort of apoplexy, and three more before long followed her to the grave. Madame Audé wrote at that time to the Mother General: "Has God closed the last link of this chain of cruel trials? He alone knows, and I must not strive to know. I am heart-broken. It seems as if each of my departed Sisters had carried away with her a portion of my existence. Nothing short of death could be more completely crushing. But if it pleases our Lord to leave me in this state, I accept it; but pray for me, my dearest Mother. Pray that my faith may not fail, and that on my lips or in my heart no word or thought of complaint may ever rise."

Sorrowfully but courageously did Mother Duchesne record in her journal the disasters which threatened destruction to the most flourishing of her establishments. The letters which she wrote to her daughters at that time have not been preserved, but we gather some idea of her feelings from the following passage in one written to Madame de Gramont:

"At some moments I even wished the cholera to break out here. It is a scourge, but it is not a sin against God,

and sinners may be converted by it. We are liable in this world to so many evils, not without sin, that I long for the end of this exile."

But she had not yet drunk the cup of sorrow to the dregs. Deeply as she had grieved over these sad losses, she had to experience the still greater anguish of seeing her best beloved daughter dying by slow inches before her eyes. It was soon after the terrible epidemic had carried away so many valuable lives at St. Michel that she witnessed the consummation of Mother Octavie Berthold's sacrifice. She and Mother Duchesne had left France together, and since then had never been separated. Their mutual attachment had gone on increasing, especially since the time that Madame Audé had left Fleurissant for the Opelousas. Writing to the Mother General, Madame Berthold thus alludes to it: "Our dear Mother Duchesne is alone in this house, where she has as a companion only one professed Sister—your poor Octavie, and you know what she is worth! Still I ardently wish to help her as much as possible. The tie of affectionate charity which binds me to this dear Mother grows every day stronger, and I may say that our two hearts are so united that they make but one in that of our Adorable Master."

On her side Mother Duchesne looked on Octavie as a peculiarly chosen soul, and loved her accordingly. But her affection changed into veneration when she found out the supernatural cause of her sufferings and saw in her a generous victim through the heroic bargain she had made with our Lord. In the too short sketch of her life which she wrote, we find these words: "God tried her severely. Loneliness, solitude, and the weariness of a prolonged illness, afflicted her successively. Satan tormented her inwardly, but she pressed the bitter cross to her heart, and offering up to God even more than He asked of her, she made herself a victim with our Lord."

The peculiar sacrifice alluded to in this passage as one beyond the ordinary scope of self-devotion is explained in the following lines, and confirmed by Madame Berthold's own letters. Madame Duchesne wrote: "This Mother was very beautiful, very winning, and exceedingly kind-hearted. she saw that her exterior qualities engaged the affections of her pupils in rather too natural a manner, and also that sometimes when she came into the parlour her appearance made an impression on the visitors. This deeply grieved and humbled her. On her knees before the altar she entreated the Giver of all gifts to take away from her those natural attractions that seemed to captivate people. She wished rather to be an object of disgust than of admiration."

Mother Berthold's correspondence with Mother Barat indicates that this heroic prayer was made towards the end of 1821. It seems that it was accepted, for soon afterwards abscesses and ulcers began to disfigure that lovely form and beautiful face, and various painful symptoms awakened fears that her health was decaying. Madame Berthold concluded that her prayer had been heard, and hope thrilled through her soul. On the 25th of September, 1823, Mother Duchesne wrote: "In this painful state Octavie grows daily more perfect, and she says with the greatest fervour, 'I would not exchange my sufferings for the richest crown earth can give!'" In the same strain this holy nun describes her feelings to Mother Barat: "My continual sickness made me think of death, which seemed so near. But, my dearest Mother, the goodness of Jesus is so great, that having always been up to that time, and justly, so very much afraid of dying, I looked forward to it with peace and resignation. Two years before I had given myself up to God without reserve, and since then, as far as I know, I had refused Him nothing, and I felt that my Divine Master was giving me strength to make certain

sacrifices which were terribly trying to my natural pride. I thought of that during my sleepless nights, and said to myself, If two years devoted to God are rewarded by so great an inward grace, how many graces may be gained by a longer time spent in humiliation, obedience, and suffering?' These thoughts soothed me during those long night watches. I can now get up for a little while, I attend to my class morning and evening, and can even be present at the children's luncheon. This is all I can do, my dear Mother."

And Mother Duchesne watched day by day this crucified life. "Mother Octavie's health," she wrote, "is in a deplorable state. She has now two wounds, one on the neck and the other on the shoulder, which make it painful to her to move. Still she teaches her class with unwearied courage, and increases every day in virtue. And a few days afterwards she says: "Our poor Octavie, alas! is dying. Two wounds in the chest, and a slow fever, leave no hope of recovery. But the weaker her body becomes, the more her grateful and loving soul clings to her Divine Spouse, and offers itself up with Him on her bed of pain."

The holy sufferer was at the same time writing to Mother Barat: "I feel drawn to a closer union with God, during the last six months especially He has attracted me very much to that Divine life. Sometimes the sense of His greatness and infinite sanctity overwhelms me, for it shows me the loathsomeness of my soul. At these moments I do not know where to hide in order to escape from the light which seems to pursue me, and I should like to bury myself underground, and to place myself under the feet of every creature on earth; it seems as if that would be a relief. At other times, when I am near the tabernacle, or even in other places, with the children, or in the refectory, or in the room where I sleep, I feel an almost sensible consciousness of the presence of God. This lasts sometimes for four or

five days, and this state almost always precedes new bodily sufferings. . . . Then I offer myself to suffer more, and I enjoy in that way a peace of soul preferable to that other state of consolation which I know to be subject to illusion. On that account I always speak of it to Father Van Quickenborn, and thus at any rate I secure a good humiliation."

Thirsting for God alone, Mother Octavie had asked her spiritual guide to operate in her a complete destruction of self, by refusing her every gratification. The stern direction of the good Father answered fully this desire. But all her sufferings were swallowed up in the feeling of love for Jesus crucified. "Oh, do not think," she wrote to Mother Barat, "that I suffer. I am so happy to feel that I am falling to pieces, and that I shall soon be united with my Redeemer, my God, and my All. Sometimes I say, 'Oh, my God, I bless you a thousand times for sending me these pains!' At other times, indeed, I shed tears, and cry out, 'O Lord, have mercy on me!' I am so weak when the Lord withdraws His sustaining grace."

Mother Barat answered in the following words this touching letter: "I hope, my dear Octavie, that the Lord will preserve your life some time even in the midst of so much suffering, and it is that suffering which will draw down blessings on the souls you are training. Be very faithful, my dear child, and often consider that you cannot give enough to your Divine Spouse, who has done so much for you since your reception into the Church and into the Sacred Heart. Oh! if you are still Mistress of Novices, think what an important and holy office it is, and how holy you must be in order to inspire others with the spirit of the Society."

Overwhelmed by the mighty responsibility of such a post, Mother Berthold implored to be released from it. But on second thoughts made an act of resignation, and

wrote: "Let all my actions and all my words be consecrated to the glory of our Divine Master! That is all I care for. Up to my last breath I wish to devote myself to the service of the Society." The following summer she said: "I feel that my heart becomes more detached, in proportion as bodily weakness increases. It cares now for nothing but our dear Society, which it hopes to be soon united with in Heaven."

On the 27th of September, 1831, Mother Berthold felt that her end was approaching: "Since last year I have not set any limits to my sacrifices, whether present or future. I enjoy perfect peace, and I have adopted as my constant ejaculation the words of the Psalm: 'Thou hast broken my bonds, O my God, and I will offer up to Thee a sacrifice of praise.' I have nothing to do now but to complete the entire oblation of myself with a free heart. My health is always much in the same state. I sometimes feel as if the bones of my shoulder, my arm, my chest, and my side, were completely out of joint, the muscles are so stretched by the wounds and the swelling. On the right side nothing is left but skin and bone, but I can at any rate still go to the chapel for Holy Communion. And then, dearest Reverend Mother, I feel perfectly happy in my infirm state. During a novena made for my cure in the houses of Fleurissant and St. Charles, I happened to open a book and read these words: 'What use is it to me to live, O Lord, if I do not live for thee?' At that moment I felt full of interior light and the unction of grace, and I made this prayer: 'O my God, if a cure was to make me again vain, anxious to please, and solicitous of praise, oh, then, let my body fall into rottenness, let me be covered with wounds rather than forego a state of humiliation and abjection which unites me so closely to Thee!' The Bishop, when I told him this, said I had made a very good prayer."

The courage of the dying religious edified all her

sisters. We find these words in a letter which Madame de Kersaint wrote on arriving at St. Louis: "Our dear and holy Octavie continues in the same state. The coming winter will be a terrible one for her. What a soul that is! God alone knows its secrets, but she will have a high place in Heaven." And afterwards reverting to her recollections of Mother Berthold, the same religious wrote: "I never can think of that holy Mother Octavie without veneration. What trials it pleased God to send her! She used to sing the following lines with me:

Mon Dieu, j' espère
Q'ù un jour enfin viendra
Où, pour te plaire
Tout en moi souffrira.
Tous les vains charmes
En moi tu détruiras.
Je rends les armes
Toi seul tu règneras!*

"Her prayer was heard," continues Mother de Kersaint, "That saintly Mother who, when she arrived in America, was remarkable for her beauty, her amiability, and talents, and the charm of her whole exterior, was reduced to such a condition, in 1831, that the children were not allowed to see her. Only a small part of her face was visible, the rest concealed by the bandages which covered her wounds. They were so deep, that the Sister who dressed them could not help weeping. Mother Octavie used to comfort her by saying that she loved nothing so much as her dear wounds."

On the 25th of July, 1833, Madame Berthold received with the sweetest peace the Holy Viaticum and Extreme

* My God, I hope
The day will come at last
When to please Thee
All in me will suffer.
And all vain attractions
In me Thou wilt destroy.
I give in to Thee,
Henceforward reign alone.

Unction. During the two months and a half that her life was prolonged, it was a lingering death. After nine years of illness she could say to Mother Duchesne: "I have nothing more to suffer. Our Lord treats me like a tepid soul to whom He does not even send temptations." "Do not be afraid, my child," the good Superior answered; "our Lord will see to that." Three hours before her death a cold sweat covered her body, her limbs became stiff, her hair stood on end, and her countenance was terror stricken. Those around her death-bed heard her say, "Alas, all is lost—our Lord casts me off!" And she made a gesture as if to point out some invisible enemy laying wait to seize her soul. Father Von Quickenborn and Mother Duchesne sought in vain to reassure her. "O my Jesus," she kept repeating, "let me at least love you a little more in this life!" The Father Rector was praying with his face on the ground. Mother Duchesne was shuddering, but supported and encouraged her daughter. It was for the dying one the hour of the *Eloi lamma Sabacthani*, and of the darkness on Calvary. Suddenly this anguish gave way to the sweetest peace. With a smile and a radiant countenance, Madame Octavie held out her arms to Mother Duchesne, and said these words: "The struggle is over, dear Mother; let us rejoice. There is only Jesus now." These words were her last. The priest and the nun entoned the *Magnificat*. Octavie was dead.

During the terrible agony which had preceded that blessed end, Mother Duchesne's hair turned quite white. But the closing moments of her friend's beautiful life left her the most consoling recollections. "Never had a death-bed," she said, "done her soul so much good." The next day she wrote to the Mothers in France: "This is the first death amongst our Sisters in Missouri since our arrrival in 1818. Those whom God will hereafter call to Himself will be happy indeed if their end is as edifying

as that of our dear departed one. It was yesterday, on the 16th of September, that our Sister Octavie yielded up her soul to God. She was perfectly conscious, and an expression of profound peace remained on her face until it had to be concealed from sight. Prayers were offered up without ceasing in her room till the funeral took place. We followed her to the grave, which is within our inclosure. The orphans walked in procession in blue dresses and white veils, followed by the pupils dressed in black. Then came the day-school children and our Sisters. Four Sisters of Charity helped us to carry the body, on account of the feeble condition of our Mothers, who are almost all in bad health."

Madame de Kersaint records a touching incident connected with the funeral: "As we had no one to carry the body downstairs before placing it in the coffin, Mother Duchesne said to me, 'We two can do it.' Half way on the stairs we saw, no doubt from some merely accidental cause, the head of Mother Octavie bending towards her Reverend Mother Duchesne. I shall never forget that moment. It seemed as if she were once more thanking her. The day of that wonderful death was the eve of the distribution of prizes in the school, so that the coffin was placed in a room ornamented with wreaths of flowers. Our Octavie was the first to be crowned."

Some people will be inclined to ask why Mother Berthold, instead of asking God to take away from her so many delightful gifts which she looked upon as dangers, did not seek rather to turn them to account for His greater glory by winning souls to Him by their means. That self-devotion, that precious life broken, as it were, like Magdalen's vase on the feet of Jesus Christ, was it not a loss to religion? *Ut quid perditio hæc?* they will say. But no; it was a supreme gain—admired in Heaven, envied by angels, encouraged by our Lord, for souls are

bought at that price. This is no doubt a wonderful mystery which it is not given to all to understand—an earthly mind cannot form to itself any idea of that pure love which admits of no admixture, which cares only for the notice of God and escapes from this world by the sublime way of martyrdom. But the children of the Cross can admire it, even though they tremble at the thought of a courage which, by a complete sacrifice of self and destruction of its earthly frame, rises by its own spontaneous desire to a sort of similitude with Him, "the fairest of the children of men," Who became, as the prophet saw Him, even as a leper for our sakes, without beauty, without glory, "the Man of sorrows, wounded for our iniquities, and bruised for our sins."

Soon after the death of Mother Berthold, Mother Duchesne's other companion in the early days of the American Mission was summoned to France. In 1833 the General Council, in consequence of the report she had sent of the meeting at St. Michel in 1829, determined to borrow from the houses in Louisiana an Assistant General, who could represent and watch over the interests of the distant colony. The Counsellors chose for that task Mother Audé, who was desired to come immediately to Paris, in order to be near Mother Barat, who wrote to her: "We desire you, my child, to accept this burthen which our Lord will help you to bear. As soon as you receive this letter, provided your health permits it, you will visit the four houses of the Opelousas, St. Louis, St. Charles, and Fleurissant, and then you will come to France in order to report to us the result of your mission. We shall keep you here as short a time as possible—but it is important that you should make this journey as soon as you can."

Mother Audé returned a joyful answer to this summons: "What, my dear Mother, can it be true that I shall really see you soon? That in a short time I shall be able to say

not 'I shall—but I do see you!' Oh, if there is happiness ever on earth, it will be at that moment in your Eugénie's heart!"

Both her Superior and herself looked upon this journey as a temporary mission, after which the Assistant was to return and resume her post. "The time I shall spend with you," Madame Audé said, "will strengthen and invigorate my heart. It will prepare it to suffer with more courage." But this intense joy, this thirst after Mother Barat's presence, and also the total failure of health which seemed imperatively to require the rest of a return home, suggested many a fear that this departure would prove a final one.

According to the instructions she had received, Madame Audé began by visiting St. Louis and Fleurissant. Mother Duchesne wrote that she had given great edification, and made these poor communities a great many presents. Neither of them had any idea at that time that they would never meet again. God had ordained that Mother Duchesne should remain alone to the end in America, and that, deprived of the two daughters who had begun the work with her, she should in her person unite, as it were, the spirit of self-sacrifice of the one and the energetic activity of the other.

It seemed as if the heart of this generous woman had suffered in almost every way, and with regard to all those she cared for. There was still one thought connected with her native land on which she rested with consolation—a remembrance of the spot dearer to her than any other. This was her Monastery of Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut at Grenoble, the home of her youth, the scene of her novitiate, the long-desired and at last acquired possession of her maturer years—the never-forgotten sanctuary of the first days of her religious life, the second foundation of her beloved Society and the grave of Aloysia. Her mind was

ever reverting to it as a mother's towards her first-born, but this link with the past was also to be broken. Letters from France informed her that this beloved house, disturbed and overlooked by works of fortification carried on by the artillery engineers, was to be abandoned by the Sacred Heart. The Council General of 1833, alarmed by this unpleasant proximity, had decreed its suppression. Mother Barat wrote: "My dear Philippine, what a grief it has been to us to suppress your house of Sainte Marie, which was so dear to you! It has been, alas, a matter of necessity."

Mother Duchesne said in reply: "I should sooner forget my right hand than that delightful place, and I have more reason to lament over it than Jeremias over Jerusalem. Tell my dear old Sisters of Grenoble who have gone through the pangs of separation how much I feel for them in this trial."

Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut soon passed into the hands of the Ursulines, who carried on there the work of education with excellent results, which we may perhaps partly ascribe to Mother Duchesne's prayers. She blessed God for this news, and wrote to her Sister Madame Jouve: "You give me great consolation by telling me that Sainte Marie is turned to such an edifying and religious purpose. After it was given up I made a drawing of that dear place and wrote under it the words of Jeremias: 'The ways of Sion mourn because there are none that come to the feasts.' I will now add David's words: 'For thither did the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to praise the name of the Lord.'"

"It is pleasant to think that this good work is owing, like so many others, to Madame de Rollin. Thank her for me; for I feel a personal interest in whatever is done for the glory of God, and I rejoice over it as a gain to myself."

In the summer of 1834, this series of afflictions was followed by epidemics which attacked the house at St. Louis. It had thirty-two pupils at that moment, more than had ever been known there up to that time, but these new calamities obliged Mother Duchesne to break up the school; it was dispersed on the 31st of July, St. Ignatius' Day. This unexpected event, joined to the insufficiency of the pensions, placed the community in the greatest straits. The Superior was obliged to borrow at heavy interest the means of supporting a house which had no resources of its own. Mother Duchesne sent her invalids to Fleurissant in hopes that the change of air would cure them. But she remained herself at St. Louis with a few orphans. The scourges which had visited her house she ascribed to her own sins, she had recourse to fastings and disciplines, and offered herself up as a victim of propitiation for the sake of her children; a procession of expiation was made, which she followed barefooted with a rope round her neck and a candle in her hand. These humble prayers were heard, and in a few days her dear invalids were restored to health.

This house she had founded, added to, and, it may be said, saved by her prayers, was no longer to remain under her direction. She felt herself that the task was now beyond her strength. The rising tide of progress was too much for her.

"I am quite out of fashion," she wrote. "Here it is necessary to talk of science, astronomy, chemistry, philosophy, &c. I feel all the more inclined to know Jesus only and no other science than that of the Cross and to seek Him in solitude. My patron saint for this year is St. Andrew and his cross. That cross, that good cross, I covet in two ways: my death or the end of my government."

This was what she had asked and been refused four years before. Now Mother Barat thought it right to yield to the pressing desires of her daughter by removing her

from St. Louis to Fleurissant. "My dear Philippine," she wrote, "you do need rest, and on that account an easier house to govern. We will, therefore, appoint Madame Thiéfry Superior at St. Louis, and you will take her place at Fleurissant. . . . I recommend myself to your prayers, my dear Philippine. Oh, do offer them up as fervently as you can to our Lord for your first Mother."

It was on the 11th of October that Mother Duchesne received this letter. On the 12th the change took place as quickly as if one cell had been exchanged for another. She thus speaks of it: "On that day I gave the Bishop of St. Louis our Mother General's letter, which announced to him my departure, and I told him that I wished to go that very day. And so it was arranged; the same carriage which took Monseigneur home came back to take me to Fleurissant. I found Madame Thiéfry apprised of everything. I witnessed the regrets occasioned by her departure, and on the following morning she went away." The novices at Fleurissant accompanied Madame Thiéfry to St. Louis, and were placed under the care of Madame de Kersaint.

Mother Duchesne has never been forgotten at St. Louis; often on the 1st of May, the feast of the Apostle St. Philip, some of the former pupils of the Sacred Heart bring flowers for the altar in memory of the feast of their Mother Philippine. The remembrance of her teachings still lives amongst them, and it is admitted at St. Louis that the most pious, most edifying, and best informed ladies in that city are those who were educated in Mother Duchesne's school.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*Residence at Fleurissant. Mother Duchesne's spiritual life. Her spirit of poverty and humble obedience. Her love for Jesus Christ. Her love for Children, for her Society, her Family, the Church and its Missions. Her yearnings for death and for Heaven. She ceases to be Superior.*

1831—1840.

Mother Duchesne considered her removal from St. Louis to Fleurissant as a special grace from God. "For a long time past," she wrote, "I had been overwhelmed with occupation, and this was the occasion of a great many faults. When I arrived at Fleurissant I thought myself safely in harbour at the foot of St. Francis Regis's altar, and near the fervent novitiate of the Jesuits."

But suffering followed her into the place of refuge, and she fell into a strange state of health. Often in the night it seemed as if her whole body were burning from head to foot. The singular nature of this illness inclined her to attribute it to a supernatural cause; and once at midnight, hardly able to endure the pain, she prayed with tears to the Blessed Virgin, and found speedy relief. It was probably at that time that she wrote to Mother Barat: "I feared and I hoped that God would take me to Himself during an illness which I did not recover from before the first of this month, and even now I have lost almost all my strength." Her companions, Madame Mathevon amongst others, now

thought she was dying, and came to receive her last instructions as to the government of the houses. Mother Duchesne begged her to remain at Fleurissant to supply her place after her death, "but finding her," so she wrote afterwards, "very much opposed to this plan, I resigned myself to live on, if such was the will of God. I was not ready yet for death. I feel the need and the want of more penance."

The years of life which God granted her were spent by Mother Duchesne in the exercise of the most rigorous mortification. Her existence at Fleurissant from 1834 to 1841 does not offer materials for a consecutive history. During these her last years there are few events to record. What we have to study, and we find opportunities for so doing in her letters, is the ever increasing advance in perfection of that chosen soul.

Her love of poverty was ever on the increase. Her strict practice of this virtue entailed upon her a sacrifice which must have been to her a very great one. At the consecration of the Cathedral of St. Louis Mgr. Rosati was assisted by the Bishops of Ohio, Bardstown, Kentucky, and Vincennes, and as some one wrote on the occasion, "So magnificent a sight had never been seen in the new world." The Bishops had promised to visit Mother Duchesne at Fleurissant. "I was delighted," she wrote, "especially at the thought of seeing Mgr. Bruté, whom I had heard resembled Father Barat in science and ability for spiritual direction." She had often expressed this wish in her letters. It was the holy desire of a saint to see and to confer with a saint. She had formerly asked him to give the spiritual exercises to her daughters. His immense labours had alone prevented the Bishop from acceding to her request. Now it would have been easy to obtain this favour, but the poverty of her house did not allow of it.

"I found that we had only five francs in our money-

box, and I was obliged to ward off, or, rather, Providence warded off the visit."

Her life at Fleurissant was quite in accordance with her taste for abjection, hard work, solitude, and union with God. "Here, as at St. Louis, I wake the Sisters in the morning, visit the dormitories in the evening, sweep and clean the house, and hunt for insects. Such are my occupations." And again, "This house does not afford any news. Sometimes the door does not open once in a day, and the parlour, open on Sundays, is generally shut up during the intervening days. I very much enjoy this solitude."

It pleased her to live in the poorest and humblest house of the Society. At Christmas, in 1836, she wrote to her Sisters in France: "The lowliness of the Infant Jesus will induce you, dear Reverend Mothers and Sisters, at this time, which so specially reminds us of His humiliations, not to despise the good wishes and congratulations of the smallest and most abject house of the Sacred Heart. As a compensation for our insignificance we are in the house expressly dedicated to St. Francis Regis, and we have in our church the altar promised to him by a vow made in France with the view of obtaining his protection for our American missions.

The poorest of the nuns in this poorest of houses was certainly Mother Duchesne. We find the following passage in the statements of her contemporaries. "She was the St. Francis of Assisi of the Society. Everything in her and about her was stamped with the marks of crucified life. She would have liked to disappear from the sight of men, and it may indeed be said that no one occupied less space in the world than Mother Duchesne. Her room was a miserable hole with a single window, in which paper supplied the place of some of the panes; her bed was a mattress two inches thick, laid on the ground by night and put away in

the day in a cupboard; her only covering at night was an old piece of black stuff with a cross like a pall. Once when Mgr. Dubourg was visiting her with some of his priests this bedding slipped out of the recess and fell at his feet. He pointed it out to them, and said, "See, gentlemen, and admire the bed of the valiant woman."

Her contemporaries describe Mother Duchesne as always dressed, winter and summer, in the same old patched habit, which age had made rather yellow than black, and which had been so often mended and diminished in breadth that at last it looked like a sack. Her stockings, shoes, and clothes were made up of odd pieces stitched together." She practised equal poverty in her letter paper, writing generally on the back and the blank pages of the letters she received. When she was asked why all the rags and tatters in the house were brought to her room, "Oh, they all know," she answered, "my fancy for old things, and so each one brings me her little offering."

If somebody out of charity made her a present of clothing, it was only displayed when the benefactress happened to call. She spoke of the virtue of poverty with enthusiasm. To her might be applied what she wrote of another Sister: "Good is done here in great poverty. Sister Catherine quite revels in it."

In spite of the icy cold which prevails during the winter in Missouri she did not indulge in a fire. During the severe winter of 1835 to 1836 we read in one of her letters that the cold froze their breath and fastened their lips together, and that in the night there was ice on their pillows and sheets. A great part of her time that winter was spent in a kitchen where the cold was so intense that when she touched anything made of metal her fingers stuck to it, and could not be removed without tearing the skin. In many of her letters written during those months it is easy to see from the handwriting what must have been the rigorous

cold she endured. She owned it made the pen fall from her hand. Once when her fingers were in a worse plight than usual a remedy was suggested. "No, give me a handful of salt," she answered, and rubbed them unmercifully.

It was the same about her food. In the morning after the children's breakfast Mother Duchesne carefully collected the scraps the pupils left on their plates, and filled with them her own tin bowl, moistening them with a little coffee and milk, mixed with a great deal of water. She was faithful to her tin bowl, even when the community became rich enough to buy crockery. At none of the meals would she eat the piece of bread provided for her; she would take nothing but the scraps and crusts, of which she had always some in store. Her daughters often tried to make her give up these acts of mortification, which were too much for her strength. But her answer always was, "They are nothing in comparison to the heroic actions of St. John of the Cross, St. Bruno, the Blessed John Berchmans." The lives and examples of the saints were ever present to her mind. She worked incessantly. Mending was her favourite occupation. When every one was gone to bed she went round the dormitories of the children, of the nuns, and the Sisters, and examined their stockings. Those that were torn she mended during the night, and brought them back stealthily to the bedside of the owners. A commissioner of the convent still living remembers quite well having found her stockings thus mended by Mother Duchesne; shoes she also repaired in the same way. Only when her needle wanted threading she had to appeal to the charity of any good eyes that happened to be awake. Sometimes she would go on tiptoe to the pupil's dormitory and ask this service of some pupil not yet asleep, whom she bound to secrecy. The children used to wonder how it happened that the things torn the evening before were mended by daybreak. This was Mother Duchesne's secret.

Nothing came amiss to her. The community could not afford to keep a servant, and the most arduous employments fell to her share. As she was not very handy she often had the humiliation of failing in her efforts. She says in her journal: "We have no servant, and are so overpoweringly busy that it is difficult to find time to meet and wish one another a happy new year. It was in the midst of the noise of washing up in the kitchen, where an icy wind cuts one in two, that we renewed our sacrifice and thought of our Sisters in France." Even their prayers were interrupted by the roughest kind of work. Once on the second day of a retreat a drove of pigs arrived which were to supply food for the winter. The poor community could not manage to feed them, and so had them killed at once. Then they all set to work cutting and salting the meat in the intervals of the services, dividing their time between the sermons and the larder.

Like a hermit in old days, Mother Duchesne spent hours digging and working in the garden, and when the bell rang hastened to the chapel, leaving at the door her spade and her apron. Sometimes she happened to forget to take off her garden bonnet, a wonderful contrivance, made of old newspapers, for protection against the sun. It was difficult for the younger Sisters to keep their countenances when, turning round for the blessing, they caught sight of their Reverend Mother's face under this strange head-dress.

But it was chiefly to the care of her sick children that Mother Duchesne devoted herself. She sat and worked by their bedside, and amused them with pious and interesting stories. When there was serious illness in the house nothing could make her leave the sufferers. If one of them had to go through an operation, she insisted upon being present against the advice of the doctor, who knew how much the sight affected her. "No, no," she used to

say, "excuse me, sir. I ought to be here, and I will not go away."

For weeks together she alone nursed a poor woman and her child. Always on the watch for every opportunity of practising charity, she never spared herself any fatigue. One of her nuns wrote: "Do get prayers, dear Reverend Mother for our Mother Duchesne, for we very much need God's help to preserve her life. She takes no care of herself. Fancy her sitting up eleven nights with a sick Sister, and absolutely refusing to take any rest. I cannot understand how she can go through such an amount of fatigue at her advanced age. It seems to me miraculous."

The foundation of all these virtues was humility, which made her place herself at everybody's feet, and hence arose her perfect obedience to her Superiors. She wrote one day to Mother Barat, "I am sorry, dear Reverend Mother, that you consult me as if I could have a will and any possessions of my own. It is you who have to decide, to settle everything, and I have nothing to do but to conform myself entirely to your wishes, which I respect, and assent to beforehand."

Obedience did sometimes cost her an effort. After she had become attached to the poor and humble house of Fleurissant, having supposed from something she had heard that there was question of removing her to a more southern residence, she felt a great apprehension on the subject.

"I have not courage for it, dear Reverend Mother," she wrote, "here I am more within reach of spiritual assistance than in any other part of the United States. It is just what I want for my last days. I know that Madame Xavier has said that I shall end my life in her house, but I should be afraid of it, for I know that during three months they had no Mass, even on Sundays and holy days. I do not feel my conscience quiet enough to live away from the assistance of the Church in my last moments. Suffer me

therefore, dear Reverend Mother, to die in Missouri. I will obey any one you like."

Two years afterwards she conceived the same fears, and made the same objections. But then it struck her that, according to St. Francis of Sales' maxim, it was more perfect to ask nothing, to refuse nothing, and to desire nothing. Mother Duchesne felt a scruple at having so much insisted on remaining in her poor little house, and we find these words in a letter she wrote about that time. "By the advice of our Fathers I retract, though not without an effort, the request I made you not to send me elsewhere. I am quite ready to obey, at any cost, whatever may be the change you have in view, however much I may dread it."

It may be truly said that Mother Duchesne lived in God. Her ordinary ejaculations were acts of union and offering to Jesus Christ: "O my Jesus! It is for Thee! O my Jesus, mercy!" All the great and hard sacrifices she was daily making were every day presented to her Divine Spouse in this prayer, which was found written in her own hand. "Grant me, my Lord, to die to all things in this world, and that for Thy sake I may be despised and misunderstood. Make me find my rest in Thee, and not in any of the things here below, which I might desire. Let my heart find in Thee, and Thee only, its refuge, for Thou art its true peace. Except Thee everything is vile and contemptible in my sight."

From one of her letters at that time we can gather what was her method of prayer.

"When we meet together in the evening before prayers, if I can utter three sentences and speak for three minutes as a preparation for the meditation, it is as much as I can do. I never could *reflect* on anything; I *see it*, and what I see is what I shall continue to see for the next ten years without the least change or addition. I never can see anything in detail or in its different parts. Something

strikes me as a whole, I cannot notice any divisions. When people speak or preach at length, in spite of all my efforts I reduce all they say to a few words. I do not understand amplifying a subject. This being the case, all methods and considerations simply distract me."

Her soul and her mind seem to have been simple, like her character. She reduced all the acts of her spiritual life to that unity in which we shall see God in Heaven."

Towards the Blessed Sacrament her devotion was intense. She used to kneel for hours before the tabernacle in adoration and close union with her Divine Spouse. Not satisfied with hearing the community Mass, she always assisted at as many as were said in the house. Nothing made her so happy as to supply for a server at Mass when one could not be obtained. Up to her very old age she would kneel for that purpose near the altar without any support, however many Masses there might be. Communion was her daily bread, and to be deprived of it her severest trial.

It was Jesus Christ whom she saw in the children she loved so well. In all her instructions and reproofs it was on Him everything she said was founded. One of her daughters wrote that her applications of Divine truths seemed to bring them before their eyes in a real and living manner. It often happened that bishops overhearing her speaking to her pupils were struck with admiration, and declared that a priest could not do better. The spirit of Jesus Christ seemed to animate all her actions and all her words. "Do you know, children," she used to say to insubordinate pupils, "that what you are doing displeases our Lord?" That was enough to make them fall on their knees. Once a child whom no one could control said, "Take me to Madame Duchesne, she knows how to manage me. She will speak of Jesus Christ, and I shall beg forgiveness and kiss her feet."

After God what she loved best was the Society of the

Sacred Heart of Jesus. In the letters from America we read: "During the recreations she would tell us all the circumstances that led to its foundation. She talked of Mother Barat, Father Varin, Father de Tournély, M. Perreau, and all that golden age of our dear Society. She had copied in her own hand all the letters of our Mother Foundress, and carried them about with her. Often she read them on her knees, and her face used to brighten up when she looked at the words, "My dear Philippine."

Faithfulness in friendship was one of the virtues of this noble-hearted woman. She preserved to the last a strong affection for the early companions of her religious life. Her letters are full of their names. We will quote only one of them, written on the 8th of October, 1834, two days before her departure for Fleurissant, to her former novice on her dear mountain, Madame Emile Giraud. "My very dear friend in Jesus Christ, your letter went to my heart. It reminded me so much of our early days of intimacy. We made our first vows at Ste. Marie-d'en-Haut, and there we tried together to inaugurate as far as we could religious life, on the morrow, or rather still in the midst of the last storms of the Revolution. Then, again, we made more solemn vows, with a more touching ceremony, under our dear Mother Barat. If David can say that to eat at the same table is in itself a pledge of union, how much more must the Table and the Bread we have shared form between us delightful and inseparable ties. And then we had the same spiritual Father, that angel of peace and austerity, whom I still go on regretting. We were friends in the novitiate, companions in memorable retreats, companions in the same employments and desires, until Japan, where we were to have gone together, was changed for me into America, and for you, dear friend, into a small Department of France. But do not be afraid, you are doing more good in your corner of the world than I arrive at in my great mission

and my small house, which I am about to exchange for a still smaller one. But then it is dedicated to St. Francis Regis, that saint so hidden in his life, and whose happy fate must be coveted by all who are devoted to him."

Nor was Mother Duchesne less fondly united with Mother Thérèse, with whom she had spent such happy days at Grenoble. She once complained to this good Mother of her prolonged silence, and received this characteristic answer:

"My dear good Mother, there is no one with whom I keep less silence than with you. There is no day, no hour, no instant in which I do not speak of you to the Heart of Jesus. I think that in proportion to the loosening of natural ties those that bind souls together seem to increase. I should like indeed to write to you more frequently, but at such a distance one can express very imperfectly what one would like to say. I should like to tell you how much I love you in God. Our Good Master sees it and makes it known to you. I should like to speak to you of the immense desire I have to see the Heart of Jesus known, loved, served, and glorified everywhere. . . . Speak to me also of yourself, dear friend. I hear that you have many crosses. Are they exterior or interior? Do speak to me very fully about yourself. I might perhaps be able to help you a little. Have you many spiritual resources? Is your soul in the desert? It is my attachment to you that makes me inquisitive. As to my soul, my dear Mother, it is in a state of complete isolation on the side of God, and still more on the side of creatures. But at the same time faith assures me that God fills it, and I love this destitution, hard as it is to my feelings. I love souls more than my life, nevertheless I am sure it is my sins which prevent me from attracting others to the love of our Good Master. Oh, let us live in God, my dear Mother. Let us do so thoroughly by prayer, and by dying to ourselves and our

own will, and placing everything belonging to us under the feet of Jesus. Let the will of our Master be our will; let us seek for nothing more here below, nothing—nothing at all."

As to Mother Barat, beyond any one else she reciprocated the devoted affection of her daughter in Christ. "It never has and never can be diminished," she wrote in the year 1837, "either by absence or by time. On the contrary, if it could be increased, your zeal and your long labours for the Society in America would redouble it, for I never forget what you have done and suffered. I wish I could gratify your wishes by procuring you that rest which you have so good a right to claim from our affection, and, I may add, our gratitude. But where can I find some one to fill your place? You know that I wished to suppress the house at Fleurissant, but you gave me yourself good reasons for maintaining that establishment, the solitude of which is so favourable for a novitiate. When I can send there a Mistress of Novices you will be free. And then why should you not come and die at home? We should then at any rate meet again. This can be determined by the next Council. In the meantime, pray for us. Farewell, dear Philippine."

It was not, however, in the order of God's providence that the affectionate hope Mother Barat expressed in this letter should be realized, and the devoted servant of the Foreign Mission see again her native land. No earthly consolation was to diminish her sufferings and her merit. At another time Mother Barat thought that America could, for a while at least, spare Mother Duchesne, and she wrote words which would have been for her an order. But the letter which said "Come, dear Philippine" never reached her, and important affairs having arisen immediately afterwards, another was despatched, requesting her, if she had not left her post, to remain where she was. And ought we

not to rejoice that such was the case? Mother Duchesne coming home to die peaceably in France, surrounded by her loving Sisters and friends, would have given the world a less admirable and heroic example than the one she has left behind her. For a valiant woman like her it seemed indeed the right thing that she should remain and die on the field of battle.

This was evidently the feeling of Father Varin, who wrote to her in 1839: "My dear Mother, and still my daughter in Jesus Christ, it must never be said that I left this world without once more expressing all I feel, and shall ever feel for you in Jesus Christ. A great many years ago, almost as soon as you joined the Society, I foresaw that our Divine Master would employ you beyond the Atlantic in extending to distant lands the knowledge and love of His Divine Heart. His intentions have been happily accomplished, and you have been an instrument of His mercies to distant nations. Courage then, and confidence to the end. What a consolation it will be when that Divine Master calls you to Himself, to feel that you leave behind you a numerous family, which will continue to labour with ardour for the work to which you have sacrificed liberty, rest, and life."

We must not neglect to add that Madame Duchesne's own relatives were always as fondly loved by her as in the days of her youth. No lawful affections in accordance with God's will ever lost their power over that devoted heart. We find her in her old age writing to Madame de Mauduit: "My dear sister, I long to hear about everything that interests you, for I always feel as if there was a very peculiar tie between us. It is owing, perhaps, to our both being so devoted to St. Francis Regis. Tell me if Amélie is as pious as ever; how her husband is, and how many children she has. And how do you endure your solitude? Oh, how I covet for you that abundance of con-

solation which is only to be found in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and makes up for the hardest privations that nature has to endure. I often think of my good sister, and keep wishing her all the happiness she deserves, and which her affectionate heart longs to give to others." In 1828 she wrote: "Since my arrival in America, I have heard of the deaths of so many relatives, and of persons younger than we are, that I hardly venture to conclude that the friends of our childhood are still in the land of the living. We all thought that our parting might prove a final one as to this world. Let us then, by the practice of good works, keep up the sweet hope of meeting for ever in the next."

Constance and Joséphine, like their sisters Aloysia, Amélie, and their brother Henry, embraced the religious life. Madame Duchesne's first impulse when she heard of it was to thank God, and then to comfort a mother deprived of five of her children. It was in 1829 that she wrote as follows to Madame Jouve: "I know how great a sacrifice it has been to you to part with Constance, and how isolated you must feel after having been surrounded by so many children. But you must remember that they belong to God more than to you, and comfort yourself also with the thought that even in this life these children will be happier in the service of God than those most brilliantly established in the world." And in 1836, speaking of Joséphine's vocation, she says: "It grieves me to think of your loneliness, but it is by multiplying these sacrifices for the salvation of your dear children that you will increase your merits, and secure their true happiness. The world has been saved by the Cross, and it is only under its shadow that solid virtue exists." In the following year, 1837, when this, the youngest of her nieces had become a nun, she wrote: "My dear sister, if Abraham's sacrifice has been so highly extolled, if God Himself praised and rewarded it so greatly, what will He not do for you who

have presented Him with five such chosen victims? You did not offer for the service of the altar the useless members of your family, in order to establish more prosperously in the world those you loved best; it has been the chosen ones of the flock, the first fruits of your garden, the gifts of Abel and Solomon which you have given to God, children who might have shone in the world, and reflected glory on their parents by earthly success and prosperity; the very marrow of the holocaust. If here below you already receive the hundredfold by the good reputation of those you have given to God what will be your joy when you meet them in Heaven, crowned with glory, blessing the hand that guided them, and gratefully surrounding you!"

Devoted herself to the Society of the Sacred Heart, and happy in it, Mother Duchesne longed of course to see those of her relatives who had a religious vocation join her beloved Order,* but there was nothing exclusive in her filial piety, and speaking of Joséphine, who had made choice of the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, she says: "Do not be afraid that I shall love Joséphine less than my other nieces. God is the author of all religious societies, and prepares in each of them chosen souls. The ways are different, the end is the same, and will, I trust, find us all united."

But much as the servant of God cared for her own relatives and her religious family, it was Jesus in His Church that filled her heart with the most intense love and the deepest solicitude. The Catholic Church, its august

* When she heard of the widowhood of her dearest friend Madame de Rollin, she wrote as follows: "How I wish that after having so well fulfilled her part in the world, and all the duties of a daughter and a wife, she would now consecrate herself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The wound in her own is too recent and too great to bear at present the suggestion of such a remedy; but I should not be surprised if she thought of it later on, and proved very useful to the Society."

Head, its works, its struggles, its sufferings were ever foremost in her thoughts and affections. She was ardently attached to the Holy See. We are told that "she looked in the Catholic papers for news from Rome, though she never read any other articles. At the time of recreation, she had almost always something to say about the Holy Father, Rome, or her Society. Other subjects had no interest for her. She ever spoke with love of the Sovereign Pontiff, and called him affectionately "our Jesus upon earth." *The Annals of the Propagation of the Faith* were her favourite reading. As soon as she became acquainted with them, she had no rest till she received the numbers, and encouraged to the utmost their translation and diffusion, calling them "the Acts of the Apostles under a new form."

But in the midst of her great love for the whole Church, it was for its interests in America that she felt most deeply. The ever-increasing progress of Catholicism in that country was a constant subject of exultation to her. It had begun with the Council at Baltimore, and those which had since then been periodically held accelerated this extension. The district of Missouri, which had been for a while disorganized by Mgr. Dubourg's departure, was reconstituted, and in 1833, Mgr. Rosati could write: "What a happiness it is to me to be able to tell you that, thanks to the mercy of Providence, I count now in my diocese forty priests, two flourishing colleges, a seminary, a hospital, two orphanages, nine communities of women devoted to the education of girls, and more than twenty churches."

A college of Jesuits had been established at St. Louis in 1831, under the direction of Father Verhaegen, one of the novices of the farm at Fleurissant. The zeal of the Fathers was no longer satisfied with the missions of St. Charles, Dardennes, and Le Portage des Sioux. A group of new settlements, comprising Eroye, New London, Palmyra, the

Prairie of Hautcocq, Maramée, Fulton, Côte-sans-Dessein, Jefferson, Colombia, Franklin, and Boonsville, were peopled with Catholics, to whom they preached the Word of God. "We see every day," the Bishop of St. Louis wrote, "carts full of emigrants, with their goods and chattels, their wives and children, their horses and cattle, arriving from places several hundreds of leagues off, and forming new parishes, which we have to visit."

And further still the missionaries were marching to convert the savages. Some of them, Father von Quickenborn for instance, encamped amongst the Osages and carried with them a banner of the Blessed Virgin, designed and painted by Madame Duchesne. That zealous missioner wrote that it would be easy to establish a school for the education of girls, and that the nuns of the Sacred Heart would work there with success. Others had penetrated into the forests of the Flatheads, beyond the Rocky Mountains, near the sources of the Missouri, at more than five hundred leagues from St. Louis. "If God sends us reinforcements," Father de Theux wrote, "I have not the least doubt that the Society of Jesus will do as much good to the Indians of Missouri, as it did in other days to those of Canada and Paraguay."

The whole of America underwent this blessed change. It was no longer by individual and isolated efforts that the Church carried on her holy mission, but by institutions which gave strength and stability to her efforts. Each new bishopric became the centre of an apostolate, which extended itself in every direction. Education was the great instrument of these conquests. To speak only of schools for girls, besides the nuns of the Sacred Heart, the Sisters of Charity, founded by Mrs. Seton, the nuns of Loretto, the Ursulines, the Dominicans, the nuns of the Visitation, the Sisters of our Lady of Mercy, and even the Carmelites, with the sanction of the Holy See had devoted

themselves to that work. To oral teaching there was added an agency perhaps more powerful in the diffusion of truth, and that was the spread of Catholic publications and periodicals. At St. Louis at Cincinnati, and at Charlestown, besides many other places, the Catholic newspapers and reviews effectually counteracted the Protestant tracts, and carried the war into the enemy's camp.

During the cholera of 1833, the charity of the clergy decided the victory, at the cost indeed of many precious lives. Bishop Fenwick, several priests, and a great number of Sisters of Charity fell victims to it. But the work was done. Before those glorious examples of sacerdotal self-devotion in the midst of this raging epidemic, Protestantism was put to flight. In vain did it endeavour to reanimate religious enthusiasm by dint of revivals and camp meetings. God showed Himself on the side of the Church, miracles were even said to have taken place, which filled Catholic hearts with joy and hope.

But this triumph was soon followed by trial and persecution. The calamitous and disastrous rule of President Andrew Jackson proved a period of danger both to the Church and to the Union. Under his Government, the most violent assaults on Catholics were left unpunished and almost encouraged. Mother Duchesne relates that in the summer of 1836, a conflagration destroyed the old church at Fleurissant, and threatened the new one. Protestants had been overheard saying, "The Catholic Bishop is too proud of his church. It will cost him dear." At Sainte Marie-du-Sault, the church which contained the body of the Iroquois Virgin, St. Tagacuitha had met with the same fate. At Boston the convent of the Ursuline nuns had been burnt to the ground. "A more dreadful crime," Mother Duchesne wrote, "than even those of the French Revolution;" and she added: "Such an outrage committed in the midst of a large town, without the authors of it

meeting with any punishment, holds out a terrible prospect for the future.

The Protestant newspapers designated the houses of the Sacred Heart under the courteous appellation of houses of the devil. They asserted that an army of Jesuits, comprising no less than one hundred and eighty religious in the service of foreigners, was inconsistent with the existence of a free and democratic government. The American Congress was warned of a formidable coalition of at least one hundred and fifty thousand Catholics united in the South for the destruction of the Republic of the United States. France and Ireland were to be attacked, in order to stop this influx. It was found out, however, in time, that this line of conduct was endangering the State, and that Jackson's policy was more fatal to its interest than the influence of the Church, which, in spite of all these threats, was pursuing its merciful career. It was just after this crisis that we find Mother Duchesne telling Mother Barat of her joy at the creation of three new bishoprics at Natchez, Nashville, and Dubuque, in the northern part of the State of Missouri, and that their bishop, on his way back from the third council at Baltimore, had said that all these establishments were prospering, and especially one at Mobile. In another letter of the 2nd of July, 1840, she gave this account of the diocese of St. Louis: "The Catholic population numbers fifty thousand souls. There are forty churches in this diocese, and nine of them built in stone. Sixteen more are being built this year. There are two colleges, one of them belonging to the Jesuits, six boys' schools, and altogether twelve hundred scholars. We have sixty-six priests, one hundred nuns, and ten convents, three of them of the Sacred Heart, two of the Sisters of the Cross, two of the Sisters of St. Joseph, and one of the Visitation. The Hospital of St. Louis received last year six hundred patients. The orphanage for boys has a

hundred and fifty-three children, and two other houses shelter twenty orphan girls. More than one hundred adult persons have been baptized."

In the midst of all these apostolical labours, trials, and joys, Mother Duchesne was ever sighing for her heavenly home. At times it seemed as if increasing weakness, exhaustion, and illness, presaged an approaching termination to her life, and it was with a sort of holy impatience that she hailed this hope, which nevertheless was again and again disappointed.

In 1835, a gastric fever brought her to the verge of the grave. She was dangerously ill from August to November, and did not expect to celebrate the feasts of All Saints and All Souls in this world. "I have no wish left," she wrote to the Mother General, "except to enjoy God." Madame Barat answered, "You have suffered a great deal, my dear Philippine, but God has given you a strong constitution. I trust, therefore, that you will recover, and that we shall have the consolation of keeping you in this world for some years to come, during which you will complete your sanctification, and consolidate the work you have founded."

In 1836, bodily sufferings again reawakened Mother Duchesne's desires for release. "Nothing can suit me at present," she wrote, "except silence and solitude. My course is nearly over. I have never wished for distinctions, and less than ever now that I feel so little fitted for them by infirmities of body as well as of soul." Towards Easter her health improved, and she began once more to work. "Since my resurrection," she wrote, "I have been able again to sit up with the sick, to work in the garden, to call the Sisters in the morning, and make the evening visit. Nobody else could have done it. They are all too infirm or too busy."

In the course of the following year, the loss of many of

her friends, and especially of her eldest sister, Madame de Mauduit, brought the thoughts of death and eternity still more prominently before her. She wrote on that occasion: "Amélie was the nearest to me in age of all my sisters, and the one most like to me in constitution and character. I augur from these circumstances that I shall soon follow her, and my maladies lead me to expect that I shall die like her of brain fever." These previsions decided her to make a retreat with the special object of preparing for death; but it seems to have given her new lights. "God has shown me that I must purchase Heaven at a dearer price, for after a fall I had on the stones, I managed to cure myself by working in the garden. I feel stronger than ever, and I cannot foresee when or how my last hour will be." And later in the summer of 1838: "I always long for rest, but I have ceased hoping to find it in this life. Everything combines to show me that quiet repose is not meant for me; and even now, when I am entering on my seventieth year, I am the only one who can work in the garden, sit up with the sick, take care of the linen-room, call the Sisters, and visit them in the evening."

Mgr. Rosati's departure for Europe in the summer of 1840 renewed the sorrow Mother Duchesne had felt at Bishop Dubourg's departure. On the eve of his journey he came to Fleurissant to beg for her prayers. She asked him to bless the new cemetery of the community, which he did, and then bade the nuns farewell. No one knew that he would never return. Divided between her desire for death and her zeal for souls, hardly knowing what to ask and what to wish for, Mother Duchesne abandoned herself entirely into the hands of God, and Providence in its own Divine manner solved the question.

In the month of September, 1840, Madame Galitzin, who had been named Assistant General for the American Missions, arrived at Fleurissant. She replaced Madame

Audé, whose health obliged her to remain in Europe. Mother Duchesne received Mother Galitzin as the representative of her Superior, and unmindful of her own advanced age and long services, knelt at her feet, and asked her blessing.

Madame Galitzin had an energetic, bold, and enterprising character. She was full of love of God and zeal for souls, regardless of herself, and eminently fitted to forward the work of the Society in America. But her nature was imperious. She had one sole object in view, and cared little for individuals. She was Russian, and her mode of government was decidedly autocratic. She carried out reforms which were no doubt desirable and perhaps necessary, but in a despotic manner, which did not take sufficiently into account long standing services. Gentleness and moderation on her part would have easily induced Mother Duchesne to accept every sacrifice; but such were not the means employed by Mother Galitzin, and the Foundress of the American colony needed all her strong spirit of faith to recognize in those imperious decisions the will of her humble and gentle Mother Barat. She accepted everything, if not without effort, at least without complaint, and with the hope that the Assistant General would, at any rate help her to obtain what she had so long desired. She entreated to be relieved from the post of Superior. Madame Galitzin appreciated Mother Duchesne's sanctity, but feeling convinced that her advanced age and confirmed habits unfitted her for this office, such as she conceived it, it was without difficulty that she granted her request, and thus became the means of securing the aged servant of God the highest glory that a spouse of Christ can desire, that of ending her days forgotten on earth, and in a hidden life with God.

Mother Duchesne became once more a simple religious. It was arranged that she should leave the novices at

Fleurissant under the care of Madame de Kersaint, and retire herself to St. Louis, where she accordingly went, not without a lingering regret at leaving the humble and solitary scene of her long labours and sufferings. The position of humility and of obedience which she had been sighing for was now obtained, and with her whole heart and soul she embraced it.

## CHAPTER XX.

*Mother Duchesne's zeal for the Indians. She obtains permission to go to the Potowatomies. Her residence at Sugar Creek. Her apostolate of holiness, prayer, and suffering. She is recalled to the State of Missouri.*

1841—1842.

Mother Duchesne's great wish was realized. She was no longer Superior. The second and not less ardent wish of her soul, and indeed what had been her constant desire during almost the whole of her life, was to be sent to the Indians. At last, after numberless prayers, labours, and sacrifices, this also was granted to her.

Never had she lost sight of those western regions, where the original inhabitants of the soil were driven further and further off by the tide of American emigration. We find amongst her papers long descriptions of their habits of life and their migrations, which she used to write as if to console herself for her inability to follow them. Thus she described in 1832 the passage through St. Louis of a band of Flatheads: "They came from the west, from the Rocky Mountains near the Pacific Ocean, a distance of six hundred leagues, to see how the white man prayed. They give outward signs of Catholicity, making the sign of the Cross, praying morning and night, and they came every evening to the Church. One of them was ill and received baptism before his death, and was buried in an imposing manner. All we could ascertain was that they belonged to the Flatheads, a nation of forty thousand souls, possessing

two large villages ; that they are not fierce, and live almost entirely on roots—hunting and the cultivation of the land bringing in scarcely anything. It is supposed that they must have derived their knowledge of religion from Canadian emigrants. The difficulty of so long a journey and of living amongst people so entirely without means of support may delay for a long time the establishment of missions for their complete conversion."

Mother Barat, to whom these letters were addressed, never discouraged her friend's zealous desires. She wrote to her on that subject: "For such a mission you would require subjects decidedly prudent, not too young, and who could speak English. Where are you to find them? Remind me of this place if you ever think it would be possible to carry it out. Who is the Bishop of that region? And what would be your spiritual and temporal resources?" This was not an assent, but it was not a refusal, and Mother Duchesne treasured up this encouragement. In the meantime she incessantly worked for the churches which had been erected by the religious, once Fathers and novices of the farm of Fleurissant. Fathers Van Quickenborn, Adrien Hoeken, and Verhaegen wrote letters full of gratitude for the good Mother's presents. In one from Father Verhaegen we find, besides his thanks, details which must have excited to the highest degree the zeal of her apostolic heart. "I arrived on the 20th of June, 1837, in the district of the Kickapoux, and in the course of the day we went to see the Indian huts. The chief of the savages, when informed of my arrival, came to see me and behaved to me very affectionately. He is a savage in the full force of the word, his face painted black, with a little vermillion round the lids of his eyes. He boasts of not having adopted any of the customs of white men. The savages attend every week the instructions which Father Hoeken gives them in their own language. He speaks it so well,

that they call him Father Kickapoux. Eight or ten adults have already been baptized and more than one hundred children. They call God the Great Spirit, and every morning they beseech Him to bless them. If they feel sad or guilty, they blacken their faces and fast absolutely all day. When one of their warriors dies they bury him and his horse with him, in order that the horse may carry his master to the palace of the Great Spirit, which is separated, they say, from their village by an immense prairie. . . . Pray, Reverend Mother, that God may send labourers into this wild vineyard and that their works may be blest to His greater glory."

Soon afterwards a young missionary arrived at St. Louis whose life and whose death showed how far the spirit of apostleship may carry devout and innocent souls. He it was who more particularly drew the attention of the Bishop and the Jesuit Fathers to the Christian tribe of the Potowatomies, one of those numerous families of red Indians, originally natives of Asia, who through the Behring's Straits and from the Aleutian Islands had passed into America and peopled it at a remote and uncertain period. Evangelized in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the missionaries of the *Great Prayer*, as they call the Catholic Church, some of these tribes, and amongst others the Kickapoux and the Potowatomies, had, in spite of the ever-increasing tide of emigration, retained possession of the forests of their ancestors. Their wigwams, or cabins, were still to be seen in 1835, alongside of the new villages built by the white men. But at that time the Congress of the United States had determined that to the west of Arkansas and Missouri a new state or territory should be formed exclusively Indian, in which the remnants of the native tribes were to be gathered together under the immediate authority of the Government, so that towards the end of 1836 a series of migrations, voluntary or compulsory, had

re-united in the prescribed locality, the Kickapoux, the Miamis, and two bands of Potowatomies. A third band of these Indians, almost entirely composed of Christians and attached to the place where it had been evangelized, petitioned the Government to be allowed to remain in Indiana, and whilst awaiting the answer of Congress continued peaceably under the protection of the missionaries, who extolled the innocence of their lives, their docility, and scrupulous honesty, which recalled the virtues of the early days of the Church. Father Van Quickenborn, M. Badin of Orleans, and the Abbé Rezé had instructed and trained them. But the principal apostle of that tribe was a young priest from Brittany, the Abbé Petit, who had begun life as a barrister at Rennes, and then had prepared for the priesthood at St. Sulpice. When he arrived at Vincennes in America, in 1836, having just been ordained, he petitioned to be sent to the Potowatomies. This young missionary was a saint. The day that he had said his first Mass he wrote to his family: "I am not afraid of my mission, because my hope is in Him Whose servant I am. I shall be amongst the savages, at a distance of seventy-five miles from the nearest priest, entirely by myself, but resting on the arm of my God, the strong God! I am astonished at feeling so happy and light-hearted! To go on from Mass to Mass and then to Heaven! Did not I tell you that I was born in a lucky hour? Now you see that in my first mission God favours me like a spoilt child. I always wished for a mission amongst the savages. We have only one such mission in Indiana, and it falls to my happy lot to be the Father—the black robe of the Potowatomies."

An unbounded charity marked the ministrations of this priest. The savages said of him: "He is not a foreign black robe. He is a red skin—one of ourselves." And speaking to him: "O Father! we were orphans! we were plunged in darkness, but you have come to us like a great

light!" And the affection was mutual, for the missionary wrote: "I dearly love them. At night when I lie down exhausted on my couch my heart overflows with joy and my eyes fill with sweet tears. It is so delightful to be in a place where there is nothing to do but to work for God!"

But after a few months of apostolic joy in the midst of these simple fervent Christians, M. Petit was doomed to witness their ruin. The Federal Government ordered this last band of Potowatomies to go and join the two others in the Indian district. In vain they protested against this cruel decree! "Can we say," they exclaimed, "to the bones of our forefathers, 'Rise up and follow us to the land of the stranger.'" In vain did the chief, accompanied by the missionaries, go to Washington to supplicate the President to cancel this decision. Their afflicted pastor wrote: "I shall have, alas! to pull down our church and our altar, to remove the crosses that stand over their graves, and then to take leave of those children whom I love and who love me so much! Oh, if I were free, they would not go without a priest!"

And he did obtain leave from his Bishop, Mgr. Bruté, to follow them into exile. With tears and sobs they left the little Church of Chichipé-Outipé in Indiana. Treated like prisoners, surrounded by troops, who drove them on with their bayonets across the desert plains, these harmless Indians departed. But their priest cheered them on their sad journey. "We made one large family party," M. Petit wrote, "and there were smiles even in the midst of the cruel desolation of this exile." The General to whose direction this brutal expedition was given said of the young missionary: "That man has much more power than I have." Mass said in the open air, under a large tree in the midst of a congregation, squatting on mats, filled even the Protestants with admiration. On the 15th of November,

1838, after a journey of about five hundred miles, worn with fatigue and sickness and decimated in numbers, the tribe reached the river of the Osages, about sixty miles from Westport, the village at the farthest point of the State of Missouri.

There M. Petit met Father Hoeken, who was awaiting his arrival, prepared to receive his poor flock in the Jesuit mission at that place. It was time for the young priest to reach the end of his journey. He was exhausted by fatigue and fever, covered with sores, suffering from jaundice and in a critical state. He had only strength to get to St. Louis and to drag his weary limbs to the house of the Jesuit Fathers, who received him as a brother. Mgr. Rosati, and Mgr. Loras, Bishop of Dubuque, came to see him, and he died on the 10th of February, 1839, in the peace of the Lord and offering up his death for his dear Indians.

It obtained for them a house of the Sacred Heart. Mother Duchesne, who had been deeply moved by this narrative, wrote as follows to Mother Barat: "On the frontier of the State of Missouri, not far from the towns of Portland, Liberty and Independence, there is a good tribe of Indians, banished from Indiana, and for the most part Christians; a holy Breton priest, M. Petit, devoted himself to these poor people; his life was worn out in their service, and he has died like a saint in the College of St. Louis. His dear flock he committed to the care of a Jesuit Father, who has since been to see us."

Mother Duchesne's apostolic desires animated by these examples, made her pine more and more for an establishment amongst the savages, and in 1840, whilst Mgr. Rosati was in France, she seized the opportunity of entreating him to use his influence with Mother Barat in behalf of this place. This was his answer to her letter: "The example you gave in leaving Europe for the object of making the first estab-

lishment of the Sacred Heart in America is still powerful enough to induce many others to follow it. Thank God it is so. I am indeed rather surprised to hear that you are now asking to leave the State of Missouri to go to the savages, but those who love God never say: 'It is enough,' If I did not know you, I should say it was too much. But I do know you, and so I say *Go*. Follow your inspiration, or rather the voice of God. He will be with you. I beg of Him to bless you."

This letter was a great support to Mother Duchesne. On the other hand, Father de Smet likewise urged the necessity of a house of the Sacred Heart in the Indian district. He said to Mother Galitzin, who was then at St. Louis: "Believe me, you will never succeed in this country till you draw down on your work the blessing of God by founding an establishment amongst the savages." "That is exactly our Mother General's greatest wish," she exclaimed; "but we have neither subjects or money." "Still you must do it," he answered, and they both agreed to pray for this object.

Thus Mother Duchesne's favourite plan was beginning to take shape. On the 6th of January, 1841, the feast of the Epiphany, after a conversation with Father de Smet, who had the utmost veneration for her, she determined by his advice to make a formal application on the subject to her Superiors. And on the following day she wrote to Mother Galitzin, assuring her that it was the will of God this project should be realized, and that it was for this that God had let her live on. "I have had three dangerous illnesses," she said, "since I came to America, and I had never been so convinced that I was going to leave this sad world, where I do nothing but offend God, as in the last instance, especially on the feast of the Immaculate Conception and on Christmas Day, when I added to the painful state I was in such

ardent prayers to obtain my release, that I almost thought they would be granted. But it did not so happen, and I think I now understand the secret of this sort of resurrection. Yesterday, the feast of the Three Kings, the visit of the Father who has just returned from the Rocky Mountains has re-awakened to such a degree my desires and my zeal, that they seem to give me new life, and I have every hope of joining the mission, which offers itself at this moment under such favourable circumstances." And then she adds: "The missionary whom I saw yesterday (Father de Smet) tells us of many things which will facilitate this establishment, the near neighbourhood of several small farms, the security of the locality, which is protected from all invasion. He says it is a positive duty for us to take possession of the place before it is occupied by Presbyterians or Methodists. I showed him Mgr. Rosati's letter, so like an inspiration, in which he says: 'Follow that call.' . . . I now think that it was the voice of God speaking, especially as the desire so often expressed by our Mother General concurs with it, and I hope that God will permit that you should carry it out." The letter ends with these words: "God is about to cure me. I shall go and be a supernumerary, helping in the house and working, so as to supply the place of some novice whom you would have sent there, and who can then remain and finish her novitiate."

A fortnight afterwards Father de Smet went to Louisiana, to beg for the new foundation and to confer with Mother Galitzin. He took with him another letter from Mother Duchesne to the Mother Visitor: "The Father who is the bearer of this letter is the one at the head of the great mission in the mountains. I hope he will strongly support my petition. Do hasten your return, Reverend Mother, in order to settle this important matter, which is I know one of our Mother General's most ardent desires. Subjects

will be easily found. I hope God will permit that I may be chosen. . . . Instead of teaching children who so easily lose their piety when they go home, how much more will it be to the glory of God and consoling for us to instruct souls new to grace who will preserve their innocence! It is so sweet to serve God gratuitously and at one's own expense! If we had only four hundred piastres to begin with, we could go in the spring. Our large houses in Louisiana might really look on that little sum as a trifle in comparison with the great expenses of their buildings, which might well spare something of their beauty for the glory of God and in order to provide what is indispensable for our poor Indians."

Five hundred piastres were collected and given to Mother Galitzin by Father de Smet towards the first expenses. The enterprise was now decided upon, but the question was whether Mother Duchesne could form part of it, for she seemed scarcely to have a breath of life in her. On that account Madame Galitzin seemed less and less inclined to sanction her departure, but finally she referred the matter to the Mother General, who decided for it, and gave an unhesitating consent to Mother Duchesne's desire. "You must understand," she wrote to her Assistant, "that the foundations in Louisiana were not our first object. It was on account of the savages that Mother Duchesne felt inspired to undertake this work."

The news that her wishes were granted filled the venerable Mother with joy. In a letter to Mother Barat, which she intrusted to the Abbé Timon, afterwards Bishop of Buffalo, who was just then going to France, she gives vent to her enthusiasm about her dear tribe: "There are half-castes there who are saints, and great saints also amongst the savages. A spirit exists in that mission unknown elsewhere. The faith of these simple Christians is such that it reminds one of the early days of the Church."

And then she quotes several edifying proofs in support of this assertion. It was with a mother's heart already that she spoke of this family of believers.

In the meantime, Mgr. Rosati wrote that Pope Gregory XVI. had sent a message to the Mother General to say how happy he should be to hear that the nuns of the Sacred Heart were going to establish themselves amongst the Indians. This wish of the Holy Father, expressed at the critical moment, seemed to throw a decisive light on the subject, and to indicate clearly the will of God. "Our Sisters would have willingly started at once," one of the nuns wrote, "'without staff or scrip,' in order to hasten where our Lord Jesus Christ was calling them."

Madame Lucile Mathevon, Superior at St. Charles, had also been sighing for years after this apostolate, which the Mother General had wished and predicted that she would one day carry on. She now begged her to grant her wish. "Dear Reverend Mother, give your consent, and we shall set off at once." She was named Superior. Madame O'Connor, an Irish nun, who could speak both English and French, and who had been already employed in teaching the Indian women in the school at St. Charles; a Canadian Sister, Louisa Amyot, and a negro, called Edmond, an industrious and intelligent man, volunteered to join the mission. When people tried to alarm them about the poverty of the country, Mother Duchesne declared that they could very well live on milk. She was pining to go, and yet it seemed more and more uncertain whether she could possibly do so. She herself wrote to France: "My handwriting and erasures show the weakness of my hand and my head. The miracle has not yet taken place. I am awaiting the will of God." Eight days before Madame Lucile had written to Mother Barat: "Mother Duchesne is getting weaker and weaker. I fear that she will not last long. She gives a beautiful example to the house at

St. Louis, obeying one who was her novice, and mortifying herself everywhere and in every way. If you were but to see her room and her bed under the staircase! She is quite a St. Alexis. With two blisters on her legs, she crawls along to go and ask for a permission. Many canonized saints have not done as much. It would distress you to see her room; but she says that it is the quietest place for her."

Then in a letter of the 4th of June, Madame Galitzin says: "Though according to the doctor Madame Duchesne is in constant danger of death, she has insisted on fasting and abstaining during Lent, and in consequence the swelling and oppression have increased so much that she might at any moment be suffocated. She feels at last that she is dying, and yet if a permission from our venerable Mother arrives, she will take it as an order, and no one will be able to stop her."

No doubt her departure in that state must have seemed a perfect folly. But there are certain follies which are inspirations of Divine wisdom. In spite of contrary opinions, Father Verhaegen, who was to be at the head of the travelling party, insisted upon it that Mother Duchesne was to be accepted. "If she cannot work," he said, "she will forward the success of the mission by her prayers." The various houses in America sent presents of money or of linen. The Bishop of Natchez came to St. Louis on the eve of the departure of the colony, and gave it his blessing. About twenty gentlemen and ladies accompanied the nuns to the boat, and a sum of fifty piastres was added that morning to their little fund. It was on the 29th of June, feast of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul.

Madame Mathevon thus described their journey in her journal: "By water on the Missouri it is as safe as possible. The river is beautiful, the banks hilly and rocky, and behind them rise high mountains. Clumps of trees adorn

the summits of these rocks, the shapes of which are most fantastic, some of them looking like immense flower vases, out of which rise gigantic trees. Others resemble great stone baskets with handles, mosses, shrubs, and plants of all sorts growing in and escaping from them. The progress of the boat is slow. Our steamer is like the miller's ass: it stops at each town or house on the banks, and crowds gather round it, and ask who we are. . . . On the 4th of July, the festival of the Independence, Father Verhaegen preached to the passengers. When the sermon was ended, great applause ensued, with clapping of hands and stamping of feet. Then everybody, ourselves included, drank iced sherry. We are all very well. Mother Duchesne walks up and down the deck, as if she were young again."

Four days afterwards, the steamer landed the nuns at Westport, whence Madame Mathevon wrote to the Assistant General: "We fully experience the grace of vocation. We all felt overjoyed and thanked God that we had been chosen for this mission. Mother Duchesne has been pretty well up to this time, but we have still two days of travelling by land before us."

The only carriage to be had was a wretched car, each jolt of which gave dreadful pain to the venerable Mother. But what made her far more miserable was to see so many towns and villages on their way, thickly populated, but destitute of churches, priests, schools, and any sign of religion. At some places the inhabitants entreated the nuns to stay and take charge of the education of their daughters, but their Indian mission was too dear to them to permit of their lending an ear to the proposals. After eight instead of two days' travelling, they reached at last, on the 9th of July, 1841, the territory of the Potowatomies.

Mother Mathevon relates that they were then still at eighteen miles distance from the village of the tribe, and lodging on the banks of the river Osage, in the house

of a French tradesman who was a native of Lyons, when she was surprised by the appearance of two savages, who began by kneeling down at the feet of Father Verhaegen, and asking for his blessing. They then supped, and afterwards related that on the preceding evening the whole of the tribe had assembled, and awaited till nightfall the arrival of the women of the Great Spirit, but they had not appeared. "Go and tell them," the Father said, "that to-morrow by the first light of the sun we shall be with them."

Accordingly, on the following morning the caravan started on what turned out a triumphal progress. Groups of Indians on horseback were stationed at intervals on the road to show the way, and suddenly, at the entrance of a boundless prairie, a band of one hundred and fifty Indians appeared, riding horses magnificently caparisoned, and waving above the many-coloured plumes of their head-dresses red and white flags. Two missionary Fathers also preceded this escort. In the midst of this cavalcade the carriages of the nuns drove on, the men of the tribe executing all sorts of figures, and firing guns in the air.

At last the procession halted at the Curé's house. There the four nuns and the five Jesuit Fathers were invited to alight, and take seats on some benches, the savages standing in four lines on each side of them. Father Verhaegen began by presenting to them Madame Duchesne. "My children," he said, "here is a lady who for thirty-five years has been asking God to let her come to you." Upon which the chief of the tribe addressed her a compliment. His wife then did the same with these words: "To show you our joy, all the women of the tribe, married and unmarried, will now embrace you." Then speeches were translated by an interpreter, called Bourassa, son of a French father and an Indian mother. The nuns went bravely through the ceremony, and then had

to shake hands with all the men, who, with their chief at their head, defiled before them. Even one old man, quite blind, insisted on giving the new-comers this greeting. These marks of welcome were repeated seven hundred times. Mother Duchesne, in spite of excessive fatigue, gladly went through it.

Sugar Creek was the name of this Indian village. It stood in the midst of a gently undulating prairie, nine hundred miles in length, and as much in breadth, which reached to the foot of the Rocky Mountains. Other savage tribes lived in the neighbourhood, still addicted to cannibalism. Mother Duchesne relates, amongst other instances, that two very fat girls had been roasted, in order that the maize of the tribe might be watered with their fat. The efforts made to save them by the missionaries and of some travellers to the Rocky Mountains had been unavailing. In her zeal, she wrote to her sister, Madame Jouve: "Now, if by degrees we can change the dreadful state of these neighbouring populations into the happy condition of our Christian village, shall we not be more usefully employed than in teaching human sciences in schools? And with a burst of that apostolic fervour which filled her aged heart she exclaims: "If Alexander the Great wept on the shore of the ocean because he could not carry his conquests any further, I might weep also at the thought that my advanced age prevents me from saving from barbarism so many poor people who destroy themselves by their bad lives."

Sugar Creek presented a glorious contrast with the neighbouring Indian settlements. "Half of the people here," Mother Duchesne wrote, "are Catholics, and live in a separate village from the heathens, who are being gradually converted. When once they have been baptized, they leave off stealing and drinking; all the houses are left open, but nothing is ever stolen. The Potowatomies assemble

every morning for prayers, Mass, and instruction, and the same for night prayers." There was indeed room for improvement, and Mother Duchesne was pained to see these good new Christians devour seven meals a day, and spend the rest of their time in sleep and idleness; but still she was thankful for the good that existed, and hopeful for the future.

The foundation met at first with greater difficulties than had been expected. A house was to be built, but did not yet exist, so that the nuns were obliged to accept the hut of one of the savages, who, with his family, went gladly to live in a tent. They opened a school however on the 19th of July, feast of St. Vincent of Paul. Their abode and this school were on an eminence, which overlooked the endless prairie. The church or chapel, made of wood, was near them, and Father Allen gave them two cows, a horse, and a pair of oxen. They managed to live on milk and vegetables, and enjoyed their poverty.

Madame Mathevon wrote: "We would not give up our position for all the gold in the world; it is such a happiness to feel that we can imitate the poverty of our Adorable Master." In the month of August they had a house, which their negro had planned and built for them. "In our savage home we sleep better than in a palace," the same nun said. "We live on bacon, milk, vegetables, and bread, have excellent appetites and our healths are improved."

Fifty young girls soon frequented the school, and the women came there to learn to work. The greatest difficulty was the language, for the rude and imperfect dialects of the Indian tribes have no analogy with European tongues. The mistresses had to begin by being scholars. Two Indian women taught them Potowatomy, and at the end of a fortnight they were able to sing Hymns in that language, though not yet able to speak it. "As soon as we could," Madame Mathevon adds, "we taught our Indians the

prayers of the Church, and especially the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, as it is sung on Sundays after Vespers. Soon our cabin could not hold all our scholars, and we made a large room with green branches. Our children are very intelligent, and understand easily all we teach them. They are as handy as possible with their fingers."

Whilst the Jesuit Fathers instructed the natives in tillage, the nuns of the Sacred Heart taught them to cook, to sew, to spin and to weave. They showed the women how to make themselves clothes. Since they had been Christians their dress simply consisted of two yards of blue cloth rolled round their body. For the men long shirts were contrived, which they wore at church. The Sisters could hardly keep their countenances at first when they saw these good people going up solemnly to Holy Communion in this strange attire, and to recover their gravity they had to think of the white robes which neophytes wore in the early days of the Church.

The efforts of these new religious teachers increased the piety of these simple and devout souls. Madame Lucile wrote that the women were almost all recent converts, and were full of their baptismal fervour. Never had she met with such faith and simplicity. The men were equally edifying. One of the promises made at their baptism was to abstain from intoxicating liquors. They faithfully kept it, and the chief did not hesitate an instant to drive away any white man who came to offer them the *fire-water*. When the missionary Father was absent, one of the savages replaced him, not only in saying the prayers, but in preaching. Others seconded his efforts for the conversion of their brethren. Mother Duchesne wrote to her sister, Madame Jouve: "You would be touched by the piety of these good people. Sometimes the priest makes a sign to one of his catechists, who comes and begins to speak, at first bashfully, with his blanket wrapped closely around him,

but soon he grows eager in his discourse, disengages his arm, and becomes quite eloquent." She added that the Christian faith transforms not only the souls, but even the features and countenances of these savages. They lose the wild and fierce look which is always to be observed in the Pagans. On Saturdays the confessional was besieged. All the parishioners went to confession once a month. On Sunday more than a hundred persons went to Communion.

Supernatural gifts were noticeable in those faithful and simple souls. God bestowed on them many favours, and raised some of them to a high sanctity. Madame Mathevon mentions that twice the Sacred Host escaped from the hands of the priest, and placed Itself on the lips of a poor savage woman. An Indian convert said that the Blessed Virgin had instructed her herself in the truths of Christianity, and she often saw her. The sublime virtues of her life and her death confirmed the truth of her simple attestations. One good man heard in the forest the voice of his guardian angel, teaching him all the history of the Passion of our Lord. Mother Duchesne said in one of her letters: "I am told that the churchyard of the Potowatomies contains the bodies of saints, and on that account, in my solitary walks, I pray that my bones may be happy enough to rest amongst theirs."

This atmosphere of holiness and poverty seemed to give a new life to Mother Duchesne. She wrote to her sister: "My health has much improved here. I have gained strength, my sight is clearer, and in spite of my seventy-three years, I enjoy the use of all my faculties." And not satisfied even then were her apostolic aspirations. Excited by Father Allen's and Father de Smet's recitals when they returned from their missionary expeditions, she dreamt of new conquests, and wrote to the Mother General: "I feel when I hear of the Rocky Mountains, or other missions of that sort, the same longing desires I had in France to

come to America, and in America to be sent to the savages. They tell me that people live to a hundred in the Rocky Mountains. Now that I am quite well again, and being after all only seventy-three, why should I not have ten more years of work before me? Then at other times it seems to me more perfect to await the events which will decide my fate."

Mother Duchesne was mistaken. It was only her heart that was still full of youthful vigour, and these heavy labours were too much for her strength. She was obliged to give up all hope of learning the Indian language. "It is too barbarous and too difficult," she wrote to her sister. "Words of eight or ten syllables, and no dictionary, no grammar, no books. I shall never be able to master such a language."

But there is happily in our holy religion another apostolate, which has no need of words. In the first instance that of prayer. It had been constantly exercised throughout the whole of Mother Duchesne's life, and now it became her exclusive employment in the Indian mission. "The dear good Mother prays all day," Madame Mathevon wrote; "for now she can do nothing else." Four hours in the morning, and as many in the evening she spent in the little chapel, which was the parish church. There she took up her abode. The savages, when they saw her kneeling motionless before the tabernacle, were seized with a holy veneration, and used to come up silently behind her, and kiss the hem of her worn-out habit. According to their custom of designating people by their peculiar characteristic, they called her "the Woman who prays always." On Sundays she hardly stirred from the foot of the altar; except during dinner-time, she was all day in church, and even then this poor meal of vegetables and fruit was brought to the door of the chapel, and she eat it there standing. If after Vespers she took a walk in the prairie, it was still

to go on praying. It was then that she would visit the cemetery of the savages, or stroll on the immense plain, trying to remind herself of her dear Grenoble by singing the hymns Father Barat had composed in honour of the Sacred Heart, for the inhabitants of her mountain convent. Her eminent sanctity was also another form of apostolate. The Indians, quite astonished at her evident union with God, looked upon her as a supernatural creature, a heavenly saint, and they paid her a sort of worship, bringing her their best fruits and freshest eggs, as they used formerly to their manitou.

And then suffering was another means through which Mother Duchesne advanced the interests of the mission. It was soon evident that, as in every place where she had worked, hers was to be a ministry of sacrifice. Her health, which during a few months had seemed to improve by the excitement of having at last attained the object of her wishes, could not long sustain itself amidst the hardships and icy climate of Sugar Creek. The winter proved peculiarly severe. A cartful of pumpkins, which had been procured from a place ten miles off, was for a considerable time the only food of the community. Except in the hunting season, maize and sweet potatoes were their only sustenance. Such a diet as this was fatal for a person so weak as Mother Duchesne. Her Superior wrote on the 5th of February, 1842: "She is much aged, and often very ill. The life here is too hard for a person of her advanced age." Another letter describes her as spending half the day on a bed of suffering, knitting, and speaks of the impossibility of procuring what was necessary for her relief. Lying on that bed as on a cross, she offered herself for the salvation of her dear Indians.

It was in this state that Mother Galitzin found Mother Duchesne when, on the 19th of March, 1842, she visited Sugar Creek. It had only been out of obedience to Mother

Barat that the Assistant General had consented to send the venerable Mother to this distant mission, and now it became still more apparent that in spite of all her courage it was impossible for her to stay there, and Dr. Kenrick, coadjutor of the Bishop of St. Louis, who came there in June, was of the same opinion. He was struck by the alteration in the appearance of the servant of God, and thought that to let her remain in that place would be to hasten her death. The Mother General was told of what seemed an imminent danger, and agreed to recall Mother Duchesne to St. Charles. The correspondence which took place on this subject has not been preserved: it probably contained earnest protestations from that apostolic soul struggling against the decay of her bodily powers. But, obedient to the last, she gave up the long-wished-for and dearly-prized happiness of ending her life amongst the Indians. She resigned herself to her fate, and wrote: "God knows the reasons of this recall, and that is enough."

God, Whose holy will she so devoutly adored, acted towards her with regard to this mission to the savages exactly in the same way as in every other case. He had placed her at the outset in the foremost rank of the enterprise, but did not suffer her to accomplish it. He gave her the labour and not the glory. Now that the work was begun, the seed sown, and the sacrifice accomplished, He withdrew her from the scene, satisfied with what she had done and desired to do. Her reward was to be no earthly one; it awaited her in Heaven. Accordingly, in July, 1842, Mother Duchesne embarked again on the Missouri to return to St. Charles. A few days before her departure an explosion had taken place on a steamer which killed and wounded a great number of persons. Alarmed by this accident, the nuns at Sugar Creek would not allow the venerable Mother to travel alone, and the Superior of the

Jesuits, Father Verhaegen, accompanied her to her destination.

It was only a year that Mother Duchesne had spent amongst the Potowatomies, but this brief residence in their village made an impression upon her which nothing could obliterate. "I can only think of my dear savages," she wrote a few days after her departure. "My ambition extended to the Rocky Mountains. I can only adore the will of God, which deprives me of what I had so ardently desired." And in another letter she says: "I feel as if I were taken out of my element now that I have left the country of the savages, and that I can now only languish for our one great home, whence we shall never depart."

So many prayers and sacrifices drew down blessings on the Indian mission. The neighbouring tribe of the Osages, emulating the inhabitants of Sugar Creek, asked the nuns of the Sacred Heart to come and teach their daughters to make "robes of decency," as they expressed it. The Superintendent of the Indians deputed by Congress declared, when he visited Madame Lucile's school, that during thirteen years that he had inspected that country he had not found a single school where the savage race had made such progress in civilization. Mother Duchesne, quoting his words, added that he had been quite astonished at the change which had taken place in the tribe during the short space of three years. He said that the Fathers had done more for the Indians than all the Methodists, who swarmed in every direction. The devotion to the Hearts of Jesus and of Mary spread from the tribe of the Potowatomies to the nation of the Flatheads. Everything seemed to promise that an era of mercy was dawning for those regions.

The United States will have one day to render an account to God and to the tribunal of posterity for their dealings with those nations, now well-nigh extinct. And

terrible will be the judgment passed upon their conduct. America, and, alas! England before her, spoiled of their possessions the peaceable and harmless inhabitants of these immense regions, and brutalized in order more effectually to destroy them. It will be seen that Protestantism neither would nor could arrest this frightful depopulation, and the definitive result of its political rather than religious missions can be summed up in the words of one of their own writers: "If heathenism has disappeared in America, it is because the heathens have almost disappeared."

But on the other hand, it will be apparent that for three hundred years the Catholic Church has never for a moment ceased to counteract, by her charity, her courage, and her self-devotion, this wholesale destruction of the red Indians, and that it has only been by violating her precepts, braving the denunciations of her Sovereign Pontiffs, and persecuting her missionaries and martyrs, that the work of iniquity has been effected. Had the Church been free to act, the Indian tribes would have been preserved and evangelized like those we have been speaking of. It is an honour to the Society of the Sacred Heart to have worked in this cause, to have been the bearer to an oppressed race of the merciful invitations of Jesus Christ to all who suffer and are heavily burthened; and most honourable will it ever be to Mother Duchesne that she opened to her Sisters the road to this apostolate after which she had so long sighed. In the midst of the anguish which fills the heart of a Christian at the sight of crimes committed by the violence and cupidity of lawless men, there is at any rate for those who have laboured for Christ the consolation of feeling, as the Prophet says, that they have delivered their souls.

## CHAPTER XXII.

*Mother Duchesne's last days at St. Charles. Her life of solitude and prayer. Her preparation for eternity.*

1842—1852.

At her return from Sugar Creek Mother Duchesne began at St. Charles to lead a life the beauty and supernatural nature of which can only be discerned by the eyes of faith. It was vouchsafed to her to dwell there for ten years face to face with God in the secrecy of communion with Him. In an intermediate state, so to speak, between earth and Heaven, she completed, during a prolonged old age of suffering and prayer, her double mission of apostleship and self-sacrifice.

The convent at St. Charles, where she now took up her final abode, is still, with the exception of a few additions, just what it was then. The house is plainly built, but well situated on the banks of the Missouri. It adjoins the parish church, the tribune of which opened at that time on to the sanctuary, and was set apart for the use of the nuns of the Sacred Heart. Close to this tribune was a little cell, eight feet in length and sixteen in breadth. This cell was inhabited for ten years by Mother Duchesne. A bedstead without curtains, and so low that it served as a seat during the day, a chair, an old mouldy trunk containing papers, letters, and remembrances of the Mother General, a few worn-out devotional books, odd numbers of the *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, a few clothes, and her instru-

ments of penance—such was the furniture of this humble abode.

Mother Duchesne's arrival was hailed as a blessing by the community at St. Charles. A few days after her arrival she wrote: "I am surrounded here by everything most calculated to edify and fill me with gratitude. All my Sisters, those I had not yet seen as well as those I knew before, are full of kindly attentions towards me."

Still it was God's purpose to detach this soul, which He willed should be devoted to Him alone, from everything but eternity; and it is wonderful to observe by what hard but efficacious means He brought about this entire detachment from all earthly consolations, interior and exterior. First, in order to show her that there is no permanent resting-place on earth, and that the most dearly-loved homes in this world are only tents erected in a desert, He permitted that a storm of adversities and opposition should threaten one and destroy the other of the two houses she had cared for the most.

It was a twofold pleasure to Mother Duchesne to find at St. Charles at once a peaceful retreat and recollections particularly dear to her. She had been enjoying this rest and these reminiscences for about a year when Madame Galitzin proposed to suppress that house. She tried to ward off the blow, and by a letter written to Madame Boilvin, one of her daughters in the house of St. Louis, we see how bitter was her sorrow. "The more you enjoy your own dear home, the more you must feel for the fate of ours, over which it is not wrong to mourn and to cry out, as Jeremias lamented over Jerusalem, 'The ways of Sion mourn.' Do not neglect any means of moving God to grant our prayers; and as Jesus has promised that He will not refuse anything we ask in His adorable Name, put that sacred Name always forward in the prayers you make for us. Then have recourse to Mary by adding to them the

*Memorare.* If this calamity is to befall us, ask that I may die before it happens. I do not feel strength enough to endure so great an affliction." And in a letter of the same date she says: ". . . Invoke most earnestly St. Francis Regis for St. Charles and Fleurissant." At the same time she wrote to France to ask for prayers at Louvesc for the same intention.

God heard these earnest prayers. A month afterwards the Mother General sent an answer to Mother Regis Hamilton which settled the question in favour of St. Charles.

The second threatened blow was not averted. Mother Duchesne had the grief of witnessing the suppression of a house which was identified with every recollection of her thirty years of apostolic life. Fleurissant inspired her with that peculiar feeling connected with places where one has both laboured and suffered. St. Charles was the first of her foundations in America, but it was at Fleurissant that the novitiate had begun, and that she had seen the choicest graces descend on her spiritual children through the direction of the Jesuit Fathers and the intercession of St. Francis Regis. But that powerful protector had been dispossessed of the place of honour which had been assigned to him in the parish church. His altar had been demolished, and Mother Duchesne had felt sad forebodings in consequence of this act. In 1844 she wrote to Madame Boilvin: "I attribute all our misfortunes to the destruction of this altar, and I wish with all my heart it could be re-established." And two years afterwards she declared that when the news had reached her that the altar of St. Francis Regis had been destroyed at Fleurissant, and his relics, which Mgr. Dubourg had brought from Rome, removed, she expected some catastrophe.

It was in 1846 that Mother Maria Cutts, who had been named Vicar of the West after Madame Galitzin's edifying

death, determined to suppress the house at Fleurissant on account of its proximity to the one at St. Louis. Mother Duchesne said that this seemed like robbing her of half her heart. She wrote to Mother Barat: "I offered Mother Cutts to take charge of that house alone with one Sister, who can speak both languages, to carry on the day-school and to take care of the church and of the priest, who is very poor. Mother Cutts said at first that it would be indeed a very good place for me. I assured her that I should ask neither for money or subjects. And with regard to her objections as to my advanced age, I pointed out to her that we are a long-lived race, that my health has greatly improved, so that I hope to live some years longer—that this would give time to await better days, and that a house in so healthy a situation would always suit infirm, delicate, and aged persons. . . The hope of obtaining what I asked had comforted me, but I am now more bitterly afflicted than ever; for when I told Mother Cutts, just before she went away, that I should write to you, she assured me that you had quite made up your mind." This letter ended with these words: "I rely on your goodness. If I am refused I shall submit, but I shall never be consoled. The wound is too deep a one."

But it was just the wound that God intended to be the means of deepening in her heart a sole and exclusive love for Himself. As Bishop Kenrick wrote to her: "It is a cross which your Divine Spouse wishes you to bear for His sake." It was part of Mother Duchesne's vocation to see ruins taking the place of all she had most loved. Each sorrow was a step in her ascent to Heaven. She was resigned, but could not console herself for this loss. And a long time afterwards she used to say: "Ste. Marie and Fleurissant are like two swords in my heart, which I shall feel till my last breath."

Then, as is always the case with those who live to a

great age, she had to see one by one God's best servants departing from this world. Mgr. Rosati died in Europe, deeply and reverently regretted by his absent flock, whilst around her the ranks of her first companions were thinned. One of the oldest, Catherine Lamarre, who had come with her from France, died in 1844 at Fleurissant, just before its suppression. Hers was a beautiful death. She was fond of music, and when her end was approaching, begged to hear some of her favourite airs played on the organ. Her wish was complied with, and it was in the midst of those holy strains that her soul went upward to the throne of the Lamb, there for ever to sing the hymn of the virgins. Higher, if not so sweet, was the path by which Mother Duchesne was led. There are souls pure and exalted enough to be capable of loving God for His own sake alone, and thus to procure the greatest glory a free creature can yield Him. To those chosen spirits He leaves no rest till He has brought them to that sublime pinnacle and taught them, in the words of St. Francis of Sales, to live here below as if the body were already in the grave and the soul in Heaven.

If there was in Mother Duchesne's heart a more tender and delicate chord than any other, it was beyond question the tie of friendship and religion which bound her to Mother Barat, and it was precisely on that point that our Lord directed one of His merciful blows, as St. Bonaventure calls the wholesome sufferings which deepen and enlarge His place in our hearts.

Since 1845 she had not received any answers to the letters she wrote to that beloved Reverend Mother. "This shows me," she sadly observed, "that I must keep myself more aloof," and she ended her letter thus: "I kneel at your feet awaiting my sentence, and always feeling the deepest respect for you and our very kind Father who did so much towards founding our holy Society."

This grief at an unaccountable silence and the diffidence which prompted the aged daughter no longer to address directly her spiritual Mother, but only in an official manner, through the medium of the Secretary General, is still more evident in the closing lines of the following letter: "I am too anxious not to trespass on the time of our Mother General to venture on writing to her. Pray tell her how respectfully and devotedly I wish to be remembered to her, to my dear Father Joseph, the Assistants General, and Mother Thérèse."

We must hasten to explain the meaning of this strange silence, and not leave it for a moment to be supposed that Mother Barat's holy, faithful, and generous heart had cooled in its affection for the most valiant member of her Society. No, on the contrary, she had never felt a more true admiration for the courageous friend whose virtues she extolled and envied. On her side, for nearly two years, she had been wondering at not hearing from her and complaining of her silence, which she could not account for. The sad truth must be told—a strange want of perception of the moral nature of such an act, joined to a complete misapprehension of the rights and duties of a religious Superior, had led one in authority over Mother Duchesne to withhold her letters to Mother Barat and Mother Barat's to her. We may fairly conclude that this unjustifiable proceeding arose from ignorance and inexperience, and not from any malicious intention, and, as is so often the case, God overruled for good the evil it might have caused, turning it into a means of sanctification to His two faithful servants.

When the facts were cleared up, Mother Duchesne thus described to her revered friend the anguish she had endured: "I had the painful conviction that you had lost all affection for me, and though I thought it must be through my own fault, this did not prevent my heart from being withered with grief."

This painful state of things had lasted up to the month of September, 1847. At that time one of Mother Duchesne's nieces, Madame Amélie Jouve, sister of Aloysia, whose name she had taken, was sent to America. The Mother General wished her, before she assumed the government of the house of St. Vincent in Canada, to go first to St. Charles, though she had on that account to travel some hundreds of leagues out of her way. But Mother Barat was uneasy about her dear Philippine, and Madame Jouve only too happy to see her aunt again, to whom she was bringing light and joy, and a sort of resurrection of the heart.

On the 14th of September she thus announced to Mother Barat her arrival at St. Charles on the Missouri: "This letter will apprise you that I am with my holy aunt. I can say like St. Antony: 'I have seen Paul in the desert.' Yes I have seen a great saint, who is drawing near to the end of her long life. I found her very feeble, and her voice so weak, that it is sometimes difficult to make out what she says. She received me as if I had been an angel sent from Heaven. This noble soul, whose lot it has always been to have great crosses to bear, suffered terribly from the thought that she had displeased our first Mothers and particularly our Mother General. A perfect ecstasy of joy beamed in her face when she read our Reverend Mother's letter, and heard that she had sent me to St. Charles on purpose to see her. Our days are spent in conversations, in which the names of our Mothers and Sisters in France incessantly occur, and also reminiscences of the early days of the Society."

A letter from Mother Duchesne, written before the one we have just quoted from, had already expressed all her gratitude to Mother Barat. She acknowledged in it all the fears she had felt, her grief at thinking she was cast off, and ended by these words: "My beloved Mother, your letter and your presents so admirably chosen have been a delight-

ful cordial and balm to my heart. Oh, how they have made me thank and bless God!"

To her Sister, Madame Jouve, she wrote: "It would be impossible to describe to you all the pleasure Amélie's visit has given me. It was more than thirty years since I had seen her, and what merits she has acquired since that time! She has given me the most interesting details about our numerous family, many of whom I have never known, but whom I often recommend in prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ. I admired, dearest Sister, the sacrifice you made in parting with a daughter whom I have now had the happiness of knowing. Our Sisters of St. Charles were delighted to see her, and would have much wished to keep her here. And it was the same at the house of St. Louis."

From that time forward all the old intimacy re-appeared, and more affectionately than ever in the correspondence between Mother Duchesne and the Mother General. Mother Barat seemed anxious to make up for lost time, and seemed as if she could not lavish too much kindness on her old friend. She took every opportunity of sending her presents, and always contrived that the Sisters sent from France to America should visit her, and be the bearers of letters such as the following: "My dear and good Mother, Madame Guinand, one of our Sisters, is going to St. Louis. I am glad to think that she will perhaps have the happiness of seeing you and telling you of my tender affection. She will tell you, dear Mother and old child of mine, that you are always present to my mind when I am praying to our Lord, that I think of you and speak of you often, especially to our young Sisters, when I want to excite in them zeal for souls and generosity in sacrificing everything for the love of Jesus." And again: "How long it is since I have heard from you! I long to do so! Write to me in a very detailed manner everything that interests you." And in a postscript she adds: "If there is anything you want, dear

friend, I should be so happy to send it you," and without waiting to be asked she despatched whatever she thought would please her.

Mother Duchesne wrote in answer: "I thank you with all my heart, dear Mother, for your beautiful presents; but especially for all the expressions of your charity towards one so unworthy of it." And in the next letter she said: "I could hardly restrain my feelings when I read the letter Madame Guinand brought me. I tried in my first answer to express my gratitude, but words failed me. I can only discharge my debt by continually offering it up to God. . . . I feel only too much favoured by your letters; being as I am completely useless, it is only pure charity that can prompt you to write them." But the most precious proof of Mother Barat's regard and solicitude for her old friend was the appointment of Madame Regis Hamilton, the dearest of Mother Duchesne's spiritual daughters, to the house of St. Charles. When Madame Jouve had inquired, by the orders of the Mother General, what there was that she could do to please the servant of God, her answer had been that she had only two wishes in the world. One was to recover possession of the picture of St. Francis Regis, which had been taken away from the demolished altar at Fleurissant; the other to end her days under the govenment of her daughter, Mother Regis. The picture was at once sent to her, and soon afterwards Madame Hamilton was named Superior at St. Charles. On the 22nd of April, 1852, Mother Duchesne thus thanked the Mother General for this favour: "Ever since last Easter I thought I should not see the end of the year, but God had in store for me a great consolation in the return of Mother Hamilton. Heart and hands had been long stretched out in longing desire for that return. All the Sisters rejoice in the Lord at this happy event. The Jesuits have the highest opinion of her—the pupils are also much attached to this Mother,

and the friends of the house are delighted." And in another letter she said: "The charity of the Superior is an example for every one, and she has a great occasion of exercising it by sleeping in my room." And again some weeks afterwards she wrote as follows: "For some time past my memory and my strength had been rapidly diminishing. This year I feel much better, and I am afraid that it will still be some time before I arrive at my eternal home. I ascribe this improvement to the gift you have made us of our Mother Hamilton. Everything now is peace in this house."

Mother Regis on her side was just as grateful for the privilege of ministering during her last days to one who had been to her a Mother in Christ, and the means of bringing her into the Society of the Sacred Heart: "You know that I am now at St. Charles," she wrote, "with our holy Mother Duchesne, who, instead of saying her *Nunc Dimittis*, is almost well again. I found her when I arrived hardly able to walk or to speak loud enough to be heard. It grieved me to the heart. She asked me whether I would sleep in her room. You may imagine how gladly I assented! Every night I arrange her bed and help her to dress in the morning. Every care I possibly can I take of her, though not always as much as I should wish. For she still thinks that she must do penance and that everything is too good for her. So we quarrel now and then, and sometimes I get my way and sometimes she gets hers."

It was only on that point that the holy invalid made any resistance, for it was her greatest happiness to obey her first American novice. "Oh, how happy I am," she wrote to Madame Jouve, "to be able to give the name of Mother to my dear daughter Regis!"

Once again before her death this peaceful happiness seemed threatened. The suppression of the house of St. Charles was once more spoken of. In her anxiety Mother Duchesne wrote to Mother Barat: "My beloved

Mother, do preserve this house of St. Charles! If you could see our abode, which makes one with the Church, you would not have the courage to take us away from it even if only four of us remained here."

Mother Jouve likewise interceded in behalf of this much-loved house, the first of Mother Duchesne's American foundations. It was maintained, and she enjoyed not only the blessing of remaining there, but also the pleasure of thinking that she owed this consolation to her beloved niece.

In the midst of all these trials her soul was ever advancing and rising higher into regions of peace, which Fénélon calls "the reward of pure love and a foretaste of Paradise." She had ceased to care for anything earthly; poverty had delivered her from every care, giving her Jesus as her only treasure. Mother Jouve thus described to the Mother General her aunt's utter abnegation. "You would be touched to see, dear Reverend Mother, the poverty of St. Charles. It is impossible to imagine anything beyond it, and Mother Duchesne's room is the very sanctuary of this virtue. No Sister in the Society can have, I am sure, a more miserable bed or more tattered garments. The Blessed Benedict Labré might claim her as a Sister. And on this point it is useless to contradict her, so great is her attraction to this mode of life. I did indeed forcibly carry away her Office Book, which was quite in pieces, and gave her a somewhat better one."

Some remnants of the veil and the garments of this loving daughter of the poverty of Christ are kept in the mother-house at Paris, and looked upon with veneration. The holy recluse prayed without ceasing. She had resolved to devote every remaining moment of her life to this ministry of intercession. "I will not live," she said, "but for Him Who lives for me in the Blessed Sacrament, my dear Divine Neighbour to Whom I shall often speak of your family."

As it had been in the Indian village, and indeed everywhere and at all times, her favourite place was always at the feet of Jesus Christ. She wrote to Mother Barat: "God has bestowed upon me the blessing of a room which adjoins the chapel. My happiness is to pray for the missions, for the Society, and for you, my beloved and venerated Mother, who are His representative to me on earth." Sometimes she served three Masses running without sitting down. On the days when the Blessed Sacrament was exposed it was difficult to draw her away from the foot of the altar, even to take a short repast. When kneeling before our Lord she saw and heard nothing but that Jesus was there. Once when a young Sister was sent to tell her that it was time to come away, as she must be tired, Mother Duchesne replied with a smile: "How can any one be tired who is with our Lord?" Holy Communion was her constant consolation. If people pitied her for the numerous privations she had to endure, her answer always was: "Can we complain when we have Jesus in the Tabernacle?" She wrote to Mother Barat: "My old age is spent sadly enough. My eyesight is weak, but God is always good. It is a consolation to be silently occupied near the Tabernacle. I hear every day two or three Masses, the Fathers who have the care of the mission live here with three Lay-brothers;" and in another letter she says: "I do not know, my dear and venerated Reverend Mother, if you will be able to read my handwriting, I am so old, but still about, thanks be to God, Who admits me to His table almost every day."

During her thanksgiving the children often noticed rays of light around her head. They used to look at her when she was before the Tabernacle, and to whisper to one another, "Mother Duchesne is praying;" and to watch for the moment when she came out of church, in order respectfully to curtsey to her. An old man of eighty who was

employed in the house was one day seen gesticulating and talking to himself. A Sister asked him what was the matter, and he said: "I have seen something I had never seen before. Mother Duchesne is a saint;" and then he explained that at the moment when she received Holy Communion her face shone with a bright light.

The letters of direction of this venerable nun—too few of them are unfortunately preserved—breathe the most thorough spirit of the Gospel. To one of her former novices, Madame Boilvin, who was grieving over her recent appointment as Superior of a new foundation, she wrote: "I am not surprised at your astonishment, my dear child, and still less at your sorrow. But after all it is God's will—which He makes known to you by means of your Superiors, and you must bend your head to the yoke. Humility is always good, but generosity is better still. Obedience tells you that you are not destined for the life of an Alexius or a Benedict Labré, but on the contrary, to imitate the courage of a St. Theresa or a St. Jane Frances de Chantal. I hope that you will be like them, a saint in your office."

In matters relating to the general government of the Society we find in her the same spirit of firmness and straightforwardness. During the period of trial, which lasted from 1839 to 1844, and the dissensions which arose in consequence of the attempt made at that time to alter the original rules, Mother Duchesne had begun by declaring to the Mother General that in every question she would always be on her side. "All our American houses," she wrote, "have respectfully accepted the changes made by Madame Galitzin, because we saw your will in them, but I am sure that at a single word from you they would return to the old state of things."

The same spiritual insight gave her a clear perception as to the characters and capabilities of others. In a letter

of the 6th of June, 1846, she pointed out as well adapted for the functions of Mother Provincial of the houses of America the person who at this moment directs them as Assistant General. "Both without and within the Society," she said, "a Provincial who would be a lady by birth and an American would be looked upon more favourably than another. If I were consulted on the subject, it would be Madame Hardey I should mention." Four years afterwards Mother Barat acted on this suggestion, which justified the views of Mother Duchesne.

With constant and severe attention she watched and detected everything that could militate against the spirit of her Institute, and denounced to Mother Barat every tendency to a love of display, or to a preference of what is showy to what is useful in education. She told her amongst other instances of a day scholar who was obliged to earn by needlework the money for her schooling, and who had asked to learn Algebra: "I said that you did not approve of this taste for the higher sciences. But it has no effect. They must study everything about the sky and the stars, and they are deplorably ignorant as to Scripture history and do not know how to cultivate a garden." Instruction in holy things, the practice of religion and of the knowledge of domestic affairs she considered as the beginning and end of education. In a letter to Madame Boilvin she mentions with satisfaction that Father Grival said that he recognized in confession the young girls who had been educated in the Convents of the Sacred Heart by the good method they observed in the reception of the Sacrament.

"Watch and pray" was her motto. She watched over her Institute; but above all she prayed for it. There was not a single one of its needs, spiritual or temporal, that she did not plead for with God. She was called amongst her Sisters, "The *chargé d'affaires* of the Society," in the line of prayer.

She not only prayed but she did penance to obtain graces for the children of the schools. It was the last and only way in which she could serve them in her old age. Once she fasted for eight days running to obtain the conversion of one of the pupils, whose soul she pursued with a deep and unwearied solicitude. That young girl owed to her the grace of her religious vocation. When a short time before her death Mother Duchesne heard that this child of her prayers was going to be professed, she wept with joy.

For the missions and the missionaries her supplications were incessant, and we find Father de Smet bearing witness to their belief in the efficacy of her prayers. "Whenever I returned from my missions," he wrote, "I made it my duty and my pleasure to call on the good Mother Duchesne, and I never paid her one of those visits without feeling as I came away that I had been conversing with a *real saint*. I have always looked upon her as the greatest protectress of our missions. During many years she offered two Communions a week and prayers every day for the conversion of our Indians whom she dearly loved. Nothing seemed to make her so happy as to hear of their conversion and their fervour, zeal, and perseverance. I have no doubt many of them owe their faith to the prayers and mortifications of this holy nun." On her side she wrote: "My only pleasure is to hear of the hopes about the mission of the Rocky Mountains." And again: "What an immense thing it would be for religion if that mission beyond the Rocky Mountains could be assisted. The further the work can be extended in the direction of the Ocean, the easier it is to advance the progress of the faith. Father de Smet writes that he has baptized twelve hundred Indians. There would be work enough I think for twenty Fathers and as many Lay-brothers. It is when one thinks of the means necessary for such establish-

ments that one is tempted to wish for riches." Her favourite book was still the *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith.* She used to say: "I have never read in my life anything more interesting or better calculated to excite our zeal. Those narratives are my delight!"

She was ever interceding also for sinners. A series of calamities which desolated St. Louis in 1849 was an occasion for her to increase and multiply her prayers and zealous expiations. "This has been a terrible example," she wrote, "of the punishments God sends to those who transgress His laws. Swearing, drunkenness, servile work and the omission of Mass on Sundays were prevailing there to a fearful extent. And then in succession came upon that city first an awful conflagration which destroyed thirty-six steamboats and three hundred houses on the banks of the river; then followed the cholera, and afterwards dysentery. Five thousand of its inhabitants died of these two diseases. There were sometimes as many as one hundred and eighty deaths a day. In some houses only the children were left alive."

In the midst of these disasters Mother Duchesne was glad to be able to say that President Taylor had given orders that in all the States the first Friday in August was to be consecrated to humiliation and prayer, and all public works intermitted, in order to obtain mercy from God.

And lastly but not least, did the supplications of the servant of God besiege the throne of grace for the Church, for Pius IX., and for France, which had then taken up the defence of the Holy See. "The state of Europe lies heavy on my heart. But France is foremost in the good cause, and like Charlemagne in olden days, re-establishes the Holy Father in his temporal possessions. How greatly we want the aid of Heaven to repress this passion for anarchy and division."

Such was Mother Duchesne in her years of retreat—

a woman of desires—a Moses on the mountain ever lifting up her hands and her heart in prayer, and imploring victory and salvation for the people of God.

And now we may ask, did God hearken to these life-long prayers? Did He lend a favourable ear to their multiplied intercessions? Did He reward so many sacrifices? It is time to turn to this part of our subject. *Ascendam ad palmam et apprehendam fructus ejus.*—"I will go up into the palm-tree, and will take hold of the fruit thereof."*

* Cant. vii. 8.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*The rewards of time and eternity. The development of the Institute of the Sacred Heart in America. Mother Duchesne's last days. Her holy death.*

1852.

When at the end of her long course Mother Duchesne looked on Catholic America and particularly on the immense extension of the work of the Sacred Heart, she had indeed occasion to thank her Divine Master, Who had called her to work in His vineyard, and Who, in the evening of her life, was so bountifully paying the hire of her day.

It was not in name only, but in reality, that the Church in the United States was now Catholic, that is, Universal. Sixty years before, Bishop Caroll, who in his person began the reconstruction of the Episcopate on that unfruitful soil, had found it difficult to assemble in Synod the twenty-two priests who were disseminated amongst the twenty-four thousand five hundred Catholics of the Union. In 1849, the Seventh General Council at Baltimore counted at its sittings thirty bishops present or represented; instead of twenty-two missionaries, America possessed eleven hundred priests; instead of a few scanty chapels or hired huts, thirteen hundred churches; instead of one convent, that of the Theresian nuns, nine religious congregations, twenty-five seminaries, twenty-three communities of priests, thirty-four colleges directed by ecclesiastics, fifty-eight convents of nuns, eighty-six schools for girls, more than one hundred

charitable societies, and numerous hospitals and homes. The little flock of twenty-four thousand five hundred Catholics of the year 1791 had grown into a fold of two millions, out of the twenty million inhabitants of the United States. Every tenth American was therefore a Catholic; whilst in the last years of the preceding century the proportion of Catholics to Protestants was one in two hundred. Emigration was not the only cause of this immense increase. Great as was the development of the States, it was ascertained that the progress of Catholicism had been twenty times more considerable than that of the American population.

It was not only the number of Catholics that had thus augmented; the influence of the Church had kept pace with it. The Catholic religion was the only one which had acquired by that time any real spiritual power and prestige. Amongst the eighteen millions of persons that did not belong to it, four millions only adhered to the innumerable Protestant sects, the others were living in indifference and infidelity. Catholicism was assuming the first place in public consideration. In its bosom Christian life was fruitful. Out of the two millions of those who belonged to the true Church, at least five hundred thousand were practical and edifying Catholics. In the States the work of preaching and of schools and conversions was helped on by a Catholic Press. There was an instinctive feeling amongst the people that it was the only earnest and real faith, and an unconscious homage was paid to it. When at the close of the Seventh General Council at Baltimore an immense gathering of people of all denominations were assembled to witness the episcopal ceremony of the archbishops with twenty-three bishops going in procession to the Cathedral amidst the ringing of bells and the chanting of hymns, they felt as they looked upon those men, whose voices were obeyed in provinces which extended

from Louisiana to the Oregon, and from the shores of the St. Lawrence to the Pacific Ocean, that they represented a religious power alone capable of assuming the government of souls in the present and in the future.

In this peaceful conquest the Sacred Heart had taken a glorious part. At the moment when Mother Duchesne was asking to go to the Potowatomies, Father de Smet had said in a prophetic manner to the Assistant General, "Believe me, you will never succeed in America if you do not draw down on your institute a special blessing from God by founding an establishment amongst the savages." And it is remarkable that since that mission was set on foot and Mother Duchesne had retired to her cell at St. Charles close to the Blessed Sacrament, the Sacred Heart began to prosper and to extend in Northern America in a surprising manner.

During the last ten years of the life of the servant of God, whilst she was as it were buried in solitude with our Lord, the Sacred Heart founded three times as many houses as it had done in all the period of time we have been describing. "Works of this sort," St. Augustine says, "are less the result of our acts than of our supplications."

The Vicariate of the West comprised all the bason of the Mississippi. To the establishments of St. Michel and Grand Coteau in Lower Louisiana had been added in 1847 and 1851 two houses, one at Natchitoches, and the other at Bâton Rouge. To those of St. Charles and St. Louis had been joined, as we have seen, the mission to the Potowatomies. In 1848, this tribe was compelled by the Americans to leave Sugar Creek and emigrate further south towards the Kansas, where it settled in the midst of a large prairie, to which was given the name of St. Mary. The Sacred Heart migrated with the tribe. The first hut built in this new settlement was a chapel. "There," Mother Duchesne wrote, "the Sacred Victim was offered up, and

the Precious Blood fertilized that region and made it into a land of saints." The faith, fervour, and docility of these savages resembled what we read of in the annals of the early Church. These details filled Mother Duchesne's heart with gratitude and joy. She was already asking for the admission of Indian girls into the novitiates of the Order. "Are holy persons," she wrote to the Superior, "to be deprived of the blessings of the religious life because they have Indian blood in their veins? They are for the most part as intelligent as white people, and can arrive at a high degree of sanctity." A missionary priest wrote at that time: "The devotion and care of the nuns of the Sacred Heart are gradually leading to perfection the souls of their pupils. The seventy-five children in their school are our chief hope for the future. Two novices have exchanged the desert for the convent, and others are looking forward to that happiness."

The East of America was affording similar joy to Mother Duchesne. In 1829, Mother Barat, as we have already mentioned, had written to her: "Louisiana is now sufficiently provided for. We must not add for some years to the number of our houses in that direction. We must think of the United States, of the East, and it is at New York we shall begin."

An establishment was accordingly founded at New York in the month of July, 1841. About the same time, Mgr. Bourget, Bishop of Montreal, offered the Sacred Heart a house and property at St. Jacques de l'Achigan, and a small colony had the courage to settle in that cold region, in the midst of the winter of 1842. Amongst them was Madame Ursule Simoni, who had come to that icy climate from her native Rome. This foundation gave great happiness to Mother Duchesne. She had a long-standing affection for Canada. In a letter to Madame Brangier, one of the members of that community, we find these words: "My

first missionary longings were for Canada, for I had always a great veneration for Mary of the Incarnation. But having had to give up all hope of being put there, I thank our Lord for having placed there more fervent Mothers than myself."

The following years were marked by a number of similar foundations, which soon overspread the surface of the United States. In 1846, part of the Community of St. Jacques was established at St. Vincent, in the island of Jesus, formed by the river of St. Lawrence. In 1847, the community at New York, which had inhabited first Astoria, Long Island, was definitely removed to Manhattanville, where it became the great novitiate of America. A school which was founded in 1841 at MacSherry's Town, and removed to Philadelphia in 1846, was finally established in the succeeding year in the magnificent domain of Eden Hall, near that city. In 1849, the towns of Halifax in Nova Scotia and Buffalo on Lake Erie each received a colony, and at New York important schools and associations were set on foot. At Détroit, in 1851, the Sacred Heart established boarding and day schools and an orphanage, and the same works at Albany and Sandwich in the following year. Thus sixteen houses of her Society were due, if not all to Mother Duchesne's own personal exertions, at any rate to her long-continued sufferings and prayers.

Mother Barat was fully convinced of it, as we see by a letter she wrote on the 16th of February, 1852, the last she addressed to her dear companion and friend. It was conveyed by the Mothers Maria Cutts and Aloysia Hardey, who were returning to America after attending the General Council at La Ferrandière. "My dear good Mother Duchesne, our Mothers leave us to-morrow to return to their dear mission. I am sure Mother Cutts will make a point of paying you a little visit to speak of the Society and of those first Mothers who bear you in such affectionate

remembrance. Above all, she will tell you how full of consolation our meeting has been, and useful also I hope to all the Society. I feel convinced that this will be one of your greatest consolations in your last days." And then she adds this just tribute to the devoted daughter who had so wonderfully seconded her. "My dear Philippine,—Confidence in the Sacred Heart increases every day and extends to every part of the world. We receive from every quarter applications which we are obliged to refuse. Oh! if we had plenty of Mothers as zealous and as detached as those who have invaded the land where you are, we should not require so many subjects, and foundations would be easier. Pray, then, my dear Mother, pray earnestly, that our good Master may, for the sake of the souls who ask for our help, vouchsafe to send us apostles after His own Heart. He will, I am sure, hear the prayers of my aged daughter, who has always so well understood the worth of a soul, and who never shrank from any obstacles when Jesus called her to help them."

God had kept towards His faithful servant that sacred promise of His, "Every one that hath left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for My sake shall receive an hundred-fold and shall possess life everlasting." This hundred-fold, these successes, these numerous foundations, this great extension of the work of the Sacred Heart was Mother Duchesne's reward in this world, and now she was on the point of receiving her eternal recompense.

She had spent all her life, but particularly the period of her retreat at the house of St. Charles in the contemplation of the eternal years. "I live here like a hermit," she wrote, "employing all my time in atoning for the past, to prepare myself for death." St. Paul* speaks of those that "afar off beholding them (the promises), salute them and confess

* Heb. xi. 13.

that they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth." We find this at every step of her life and in every line of Mother Duchesne's letters.

Her heart dwelt in Heaven. She loved to speak of death as a deliverance, and with her feeble voice used to try and sing the hymn which began thus:

Quand te verrai-je,
Oh! ma belle patrie!

With those fond yearnings were mingled fears of God's judgments. In May, 1844, she wrote: "On the 29th of August I began my seventy-sixth year. I long for my end, and yet I fear it too, for I have laid up very little. Old age is not the time for fervour. To-day, the feast of Pentecost, is the anniversary of my First Communion. It would have been well for me to die then, but such was not God's will."

In 1847 she wrote to her sister: "It is a very long time since I have heard from you. I feel as if you might be dead. I should not like to survive you. It is too sad to see all those we love departing before us. I have the same fears about Madame de Rollin, who has so much right to my affection. Her last letter was so affectionate; it made me afraid that it might be a final adieu. I felt the same thing when my father paid me his last visit at Sainte Marie-d'en-Haut. When he said: 'Adieu, Philippine.' I burst into tears. I immediately thought I should never see him again, and I was right. When you answer this letter, be sure to mention my brother and my sister, and Madame de Rollin, and all those that are nearest and dearest to us."

Two years afterwards the same fears and hopes are expressed in another letter to this beloved sister. "Each time that I write to you, my very dear sister, I think that it is perhaps for the last time. Old age suggested the thought, and illness now makes it more likely . . . I am

far from wishing not to die, and I should long for it if I had not to fear the judgment of Him Who, as the Scriptures tell us, 'judges even justices.' That thought is an awful one. Pray and get prayers for me as I do for you and yours. I may still linger on a long time. God only knows how long."

And in February, 1850, writing to the Abbé Delacroix, who had returned to Europe and was a Canon of the Cathedral of Ghent, she says: "I have now reached my eighty-first year, and I have been thirty-one years in America. I have done very little here for the glory of our Master. Pray to Him for me, and grant me, I beseech you, a Mass for a good death."

In 1852 Mother Duchesne was almost eighty-three years of age. A great weakness affected her whole frame. She felt it, and on the 14th of May, in a letter to the Mother General, she sent a sort of anticipated farewell to her former companions, Mother de Charbonnel, Mother Desmarquest, and Mother Maillucheau, and ended it with these words: "I am obliged to leave off: my heart carries me back to those dear past times, but my memory fails me to such a degree sometimes that I have been unable to write my own name and others equally familiar to me. My sight is also very imperfect."

Still as the fine weather came on she seemed a little renovated and resigned herself to live. "Since the beginning of spring," she wrote to her sister, "I have felt stronger, and I can no longer calculate as to the probable length of my life. It will be as God pleases. Old age brings with it many sacrifices, which may avail as a purgatory. A less rigorous one no doubt than the one in the next life."

This improvement was not lasting. Feeling certain from symptoms which she thought conclusive that the hour was come to regulate the important concerns of that

final moment, she set about it with a firm, free, and clear sense of what she was doing, and in the plenitude of her moral strength. She began by writing thus to Mother Barat: "My very Reverend Mother,—I am bidding you farewell in a sense which God alone knows at this moment. I should have much to say as to all I have given you to bear were you not too kind and I too weak for me to say it."

Mother Duchesne had the idea that for some time past she had experienced mental aberrations. That she had for instance turned her back upon the Blessed Sacrament during Benediction, and had forgotten she had heard Vespers. There was nothing more important than these distractions to constitute what she called her insanity, for she did not shrink from using that word. "I did not expect that I should lose my mind," she used sorrowfully to say, "but God has willed to humble my pride . . . though I was conscious of incessant failures of mind and memory, I held to beginning my retreat and I spent almost all the time in the chapel, but as I was getting every day more tired, our confessor told me that I must leave off mental application." The doctor found her very feverish. "But this I do not regret so much," she added, and then resigning herself to the hardest and most humiliating sacrifice that God ever requires from one whose mind has ever been active and clear, she says: "It is necessary to be well convinced that God ordains everything for our greatest good to enable one to look in the face the position in which the loss of reason places one!"

This expression of resignation was the only complaint, if it can be called so, which ever escaped her. She then spoke of the charity and kindness of her Sisters. "No care is wanting on their part. It is always our dear Mother who sleeps in my room and affectionately attends to all my wants. I meet with nothing but goodness from all my

Sisters, and I beg of you to include them in the prayers I ask for myself." This letter ended with these words: "Again I entreat your forgiveness for all the trouble I have given you, and kneeling at your feet I ever remain your most unworthy daughter."

The peculiar trial which she had apprehended was mercifully spared her, as her reason retained to the end its clearness, and her character its energy. But her bodily strength declined every day more and more, the aged and worn-out frame was giving way. On the 16th of August Mother Duchesne, fearing that she might expire in a fainting fit, asked for and received the last sacraments. She felt that from that moment it was only for God and for Heaven she could live, and with a tranquil mind and firm hand she wrote three letters. They were her last farewells to what she had loved most on earth—the Sacred Heart, her own relatives, and the Indian missions.

Mother Barat, as the representative of the Society, she thus addressed: "My dear Reverend Mother, this is, according to all appearances, the last letter I shall be able to write to you. Yesterday I received the last sacraments. But God will perhaps still delay the hour when I shall have the happiness of seeing Him. The wanderings of mind which I experienced were only the result of the fever, which did not prevent my living on. I do not know now when the end will come. I once more kneel at your feet, and reiterate the assurances of my deepest respect." Then to her family she wrote: "My heart is oftener in France than in America. I am so full of the thought of my dear relatives." To Madame Jouve, her only surviving sister, she said: "My very good and dear sister,—I have just received a letter from you and have no time to lose in answering it. I received yesterday the last sacraments. I depart from this world with the grief of leaving you in solitude. But God having promised the hundredfold to those who for His

sake abandon father and mother, you may hope yourself also to receive that hundredfold, for your sacrifices have been greater than any of those your children have made. You have a share in the merit of all the good works they do. Courage, then! There is always a great gain in the sacrifices we make for God. Ask your good children to pray for me. The thought of you and of them will follow me into eternity. Farewell, dear and good sister."

And then she remembered the missions, and her dear Indians, and wrote to Father de Smet, who by his immense labours amongst them seemed to personify that apostolate.

"Reverend Father, when I think of your great goodness towards me I feel convinced that I shall receive proofs of it to the end of my life. I received yesterday the last sacraments, and I hope that you will not forget me in your prayers. It would be an act of great charity if you would obtain some for me. If our good God has mercy on me, I will repay you when I am with Him. I beg your blessing and remain your humble servant."

Father de Smet had been aided, seconded, and encouraged by Mother Duchesne ever since the days of his novitiate, and looked upon himself as her son. In his own name and that of his Indian neophytes he made her the following answer:

"Reverend Mother,—I shall certainly pray to our good God for you. On Saturday and Sunday I offered up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in your behalf, and I have recommended you to the prayers of all my brethren at St. Louis. It is I and all our Indians, Reverend Mother, who owe you great gratitude for all the prayers you have said, and all the acts of charity you have performed towards them. After fulfilling the will of God here below, and when you are receiving the reward of your labours in Heaven, you will pray very specially for our poor Indians. I trust that you will not forget me either, and I treasure up

the promise which you have made me on that subject in your letter."

These lines gave Mother Duchesne so much pleasure that she answered them by the following note. "God is very good to give me such an intercessor to plead with Him for me. I entreat you to continue to assist my soul by your prayers, for if it is His will to prolong my life amidst so many infirmities of body and mind, I shall be exposed to many temptations." This letter was signed, "Philippine Duchesne, who attained the eighty-third year of her age on the 29th of August."

Mother Duchesne survived for some months the crisis which had nearly carried her off in August. Those last weeks of her life presented the image of an existence which seemed no longer an earthly one. She lived only for and in Jesus Christ. Every morning at the hour of Mass the aged nun was carried into the chapel by two of her Sisters, who seated her near the railing. She communicated with intense fervour. These Communions on the brink of eternity remind one of Domenichino's picture of St. Jerome, in which we see the dying Saint of the desert, supported by two angels, with eyes full of sacred fire welcoming his Divine Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and on whose lips we seem to read the words with which he took a final leave of this world: *Veni, columba mea, amica mea, ubi pascat, Sponsus meus, ubi cubat Christus meus.*

When Mother Duchesne had made her thanksgiving, the Sisters carried her back to her little room. The sacred sustenance thus daily received gave her such a distaste to other food that it was necessary to resort to a variety of expedients to make her eat.

But the final hour was now approaching. In the beginning of October she announced it to Father de Smet. "My very dear Father, I cannot leave this world without expressing to you my gratitude. Do not forget after her

death one whom you have favoured with so many kindnesses on earth. They will plead for me with the Sovereign Judge Whom I have so much offended. . . . I think I am very near my entrance into eternity. This it is that prompts me to have recourse to your charity." And then she again promises to pray for the savages, and particularly for their good Father. The missions to the heathen were the last thought of the servant of God, even as they had been the first ambition of her apostolic heart.

On Tuesday, the 16th of November, Mother Duchesne tried to get up as usual to hear Mass, but her excessive weakness prevented it. On this day a signal grace was vouchsafed to the dying servant of God—a proof of the love of that God Who had ever loved her, and loved her to the end—for she received a visit which afforded her the greatest consolation.

On the very next day after she had landed in Louisiana Mother Duchesne had written to one of her friends: "If God will leave me long enough upon earth, I think I might one day set foot on Southern America, at Lima, under the protection of my patron saint, St. Rose, or at Carthagena, under the patronage of the Blessed Father Claver."

It was not granted to her zeal to effect herself this second conquest, but God allowed her, before her eyes closed in death, to see the inheritor of her spirit who was to be intrusted with this important work.

On the last day but one of her life Mother Maria Cutts came from St. Louis to St. Charles, bringing with her a nun just arrived from Europe. This was Mother du Rousier, whom the Mother General had sent as Visitor to America. This Mother had never seen Madame Duchesne, and an ardent wish to do so had made her persist in visiting her in spite of dreadful weather and all sorts of obstacles placed in her way. Mother Duchesne received her as the representative of the Mother General, and asked for her blessing;

only after having obtained it would she consent to bless her in return. "Offer up to God your sufferings," Mother Cutts said, "for the success of Rev. Mother Vicar's enterprise." "I am not suffering at all," Mother Duchesne answered. "Well, then, offer up your privations." "Yes, I will offer them up," she replied.

Mother Cutts was obliged to return the same day to St. Louis, and to take away with her Mother du Rousier. The Visitor, who had thus received Madame Duchesne's blessing, in the course of the following year fulfilled the dying wish of the servant of God, and established the Sacred Heart in South America.

On Wednesday, the 17th, the condition of the venerable Mother became more alarming. At half-past nine o'clock in the evening she obliged Mother Regis Hamilton to take a little rest by saying to her, in a very positive manner: "If you do not go to bed I shall get up." She was obliged to obey, but she soon came back, for her anxiety was great.

In spite of her incessant cough Mother Duchesne refused to drink anything, in order not to break the Eucharistic fast and so lose her Communion. "It is not yet midnight," her faithful Infirmarian said. "Are you quite sure of it?" she asked, and it was necessary to reiterate each time that assurance. She had never suffered the Sisters to light a fire in her room. They availed themselves of a moment when she was dozing to bring into it a stove, which they warmed a little. When on the following morning she noticed this, Mother Duchesne said reproachfully to her daughters: "Oh, my children, you only think of the things of this world; it would be much more to the purpose to say a *Pater* and an *Ave* for the good of my soul." She was told that the community were praying in the next room. This filled her with gratitude. "Oh, what a happiness it is," she exclaimed, "to die in a home where such charity

exists!" She then went to confession and received Holy Viaticum from Father Verhaegen's hands.

The nuns did not yet believe that she was quite near her end; but the doctor who was sent for found her pulse so feeble that he said to the Superior: "Reverend Mother, God requires from you the final sacrifice. The moment has come for it." Meanwhile the dying nun, collecting all her strength, was uttering with great fervour the ejaculations, "Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I give you my heart, my mind, and my life." Expressions of earnest longing for Heaven also rose to her lips. "Come, Lord Jesus, come; make no delay; come and take me hence." She repeated them until her voice and her strength were quite exhausted. At ten o'clock in the morning she received with full consciousness Extreme Unction and the application of the Indulgence *in articulo mortis*. Soon afterwards the Sister Infirmarian begged her to ask of God that she might now follow her to Heaven. "By no means," she answered with great energy; "what would become of our Mother if everybody in the house died?"

At twelve Mother Hamilton, who had left the room for a few minutes, was hastily called back. Mother Duchesne was at the point of death. She expired in the arms of the Sister Infirmarian in the eighty-fourth year of her age, the forty-seventh of her religious profession, and the thirty-fourth of her residence in America. Her body was laid out in her little room, where her Sisters came in succession to admire the heavenly serenity of her face. A great number of priests and religious and of others, including Protestants, attended her funeral. Father de Smet has stated that, having agreed with Mother Duchesne that the one who should die first would obtain for the other a very particular favour, he had obtained it immediately after her death, and that he therefore concluded she was in Heaven.

Thus, after thirty-four years of incessant toil, this valiant

woman died on the very spot which had witnessed her first labours in America. If, as the Apostle tells us, "to die is gain," she well deserved to die.

Her remains were deposited in an enclosure arranged in the midst of the garden. They had rested there for three years when the Superior of the house at St. Charles, who had built an oratory in another part of the grounds, wished to transport there these precious remains. On the 22nd of October, 1855, the exhumation took place. The body having been placed in a coffin made only of wood, and buried in a damp soil, it was fully expected that nothing but bones and ashes would be found. Great therefore was the glad surprise of all the assistants when on opening the tomb Mother Duchesne's form was seen in perfect preservation and emitting no bad smell. The face was so unchanged that it was immediately photographed, in order to perpetuate the memory of such a token of Divine protection extended to a frame which penance had, as it were, spiritualized. At the moment when it was removed into a new vault a certain contraction of the limbs took place, and a visible change in the garments. New ones were substituted, and the old ones carefully preserved. The new chapel received the precious remains, before which are often seen in prayer those who, having known this heroic woman, long to glorify, like her, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and devote themselves to His service.

Mother Duchesne had said, "You will see that when I am dead everything will progress." And it did so happen that the extension of the work of the Sacred Heart, great as it had been during the last ten years of her life, increased still more after her demise. In 1853 Madame du Rousier founded a house at Santiago in Chili, thus taking possession of South America, which had been so much coveted by Mother Duchesne. Since then every year witnessed some new accession to the number of the establishments of the

Sacred Heart. They now embrace the two sides of the Isthmus of Panama and the isles. Chicago, Montreal, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, New Orleans, Maryville near St. Louis, Providence, the Havannah and Santo Espiritu in Northern America; Talca, Concepcion, Valparaiso, Chillan, in Southern America, have all successively received colonies of the Society. The foundation at Lima in 1876 fulfilled what had been one of Mother Duchesne's life-long desires. The Sacred Heart possesses at this moment in the two peninsulas five vicariates, which have each their novitiate; thirty-one establishments, twelve hundred nuns, three thousand boarders of the upper class, and four thousand five hundred children, all receiving a Christian education in their schools and orphanages. In the East and in Missouri, according to the desire of the Bishops, Protestants frequent the Catholic classes, and many conversions result from this training.

The Sacred Heart, following the apostolic rule of being all things to all men, has French, English, and German schools for the numerous emigrant children of all races. At St. Michel it educates the little negresses. In Chili it directs the training colleges, and by means of a compact succession of teachers trained under its powerful influence it preserves the true faith in a population which Protestantism is endeavouring to seduce. The only work of Mother Duchesne which has ceased to exist because there is no longer any scope for it, is the one she cared for most —the mission to the savages. The Potowatomies, driven further and further off by the American tide, have been absorbed by their conquerors. The little school of the mission has been turned into a boarding school, and soon no traces will remain of their wandering existence save the memory of those who for God's sake devoted themselves to that work.

After enumerating the results of Mother Duchesne's

life-long efforts, we might perhaps wish that we had been able to describe the personal triumph of one who had laboured so devotedly for the glory of God, whereas we have seen that noble existence close in obscurity and humiliation. But we must never forget that earth is allowed to see only the opening scenes of the lives of God's saints. The curtain of death hides from us the later scenes which are continued in eternity in the sight of Heaven. When the veil that hides the next world from us is removed, we shall behold with wonder and admiration the glory which God has in store for those who love Him. *Justi in perpetuum vivent apud Dominum autem erit merces eorum*—"The just shall live for evermore, and their reward is with the Lord."*

* Wisdom v. 16.

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